THE BASIC COMPONENTS OF GUIDE-DOG UTILIZATION

(A Guide for the Orientation and Mobility Specialist)

By: David M. Greenwald

Published by:

College of Health & Human Services
Department of Blind Rehabilitation
Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan 49008

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David M. Greenwald

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Kalamazoo, Michigan

October 24, 1979

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CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

INTRODUCTION

Guide-dogs have been serving as a means of independent mobility for many blind people in this country for approximately fifty years. Systematized long-cane orientation and mobility techniques were introduced in the 1940's by Dr. Richard Hoover. Traditionally, instructors and administrators in these fields have viewed themselves as proponents of separate, almost competitive, disciplines. More recently, however, open minded instructors and administrators have come to realize and to appreciate the value of each field to the other. Guide-dog instructors well appreciate the value of prior orientation and mobility training to new guide-dog users, and Orientation and Mobility specialists recognize, or should recognize, that a guide-dog may be the best means of providing independent mobility to certain people.

The purpose of this manual is to continue this trend of bringing these two disciplines closer together. We hope to accomplish this by familiarizing Orientation and Mobility specialists with the basic components of guide-dog utilization so that they will be more knowledgeable and objective in the areas of recommending, evaluating, and preparing prospective guide-dog users. Additionally, we hope that this manual will acquaint the O&M specialist with the best methods of working with guide-dog users in common orientation and mobility situations, as for example in familiarizations to new areas. Furthermore, we hope that this manual will enable the O&M specialist to recognize and identify certain problems that may occur with guide-dog users in the field; to know when intervention is or is not justified or required, and to know

what type of action is indicated in the cases where intervention is required.

This manual will provide the Orientation and Mobility specialists with fundamental knowledge of what a guide-dog is and is not trained to do. The first two parts of this manual are provided as background material detailing information about care and training of the dogs, training of the students, and how various problems and situations are handled by competent instructors. The last two parts of this manual deal with the situations most likely to be encountered by O & M specialists in the field and how the O & M specialist should work with the guide-dog user, or prospective guide-dog user, in these situations. Dog-guide schools have been traditionally and rightfully apprehensive of unknowledgeable people intervening and interfering with their units. There is no question whatsoever that <u>improper</u> intervention will have a detrimental effect on a dog-guide unit. This manual will <u>not</u> teach O & M specialists (or anyone else) to be guide-dog trainers or instructors, as that is something that takes years of experience under careful supervision.

On the otherhand, once in the field, guide-dog users are much more likely to come into contact with trained Orientation and Mobility specialists than with trained guide-dog instructors. Therefore, it is hoped that this manual will serve to facilitate closer communication between O & M specialists and existing guide-dog schools so that each may most effectively utilize the other, and so that ultimately both will be able to better serve their clients.

PART ONE

AN OVERVIEW OF THE DOGS USED,
THE EQUIPMENT USED,
THE TRAINING THAT THE DOGS RECEIVE,
AND THE TRAINING THAT THE STUDENTS RECEIVE.

A. The Dogs Used

1. Breeds:

There are three breeds of dog most commonly used in guide-dog work today. They are: the Labrador Retriever, the Golden Retriever, and the German Shepherd Dog. Other breeds that have been successfully used include the Boxer, the Bouvier des Flandres, and the Collie. Undoubtedly, dogs of other breeds have been successfully used as well as dogs of mixed breed background.

The important thing to understand is that, while there are certain breed characteristics and differences, any dog used by a reputable guide-dog school has been selected on the basis of its individual physical and mental (temperament) characteristics. Each dog used has been carefully matched to the needs and personality of the individual client and the breed of the dog is only one factor taken into consideration during the matching process, and it is often only a minor factor. Since it is important that a guide-dog user has a positive attitude towards his dog, one should not express negative feelings about a client's particular breed of dog, or any other breed of dog that may be used in the work.

2. Physical characteristics:

The physical characteristics of the dogs selected for guide-dog use are generally what common sense would dictate. The dogs must be neither too large nor too small. Usually, dogs that fall within two or

three inches of the breed standards for the breeds mentioned above are considered to be of a usable size. Structural conformation is not an overwhelming consideration so long as any deviations from the norm do not cause health or work problems either at present or in the foreseeable future. For instance, a dog with a slightly undershot jaw would be acceptable providing its jaw is not so undershot that the dog has difficulty eating, with resultant nutrition and health problems. Likewise, very minor degrees of hip dysplaysia might be acceptable but severe hip dysplasia or an arthritic hip would not.

One physical characteristic that has shown itself to have some positive implications for guide-dog use is a lack of body sensitivity. Because guide-dogs are occasionally (or perhaps not so occasionally) stepped on, because they must work even in extremes of environmental conditions, and because the dogs must often wait patiently under circumstances not always comfortable, it is good if the dogs selected are not overly sensitive to physical pain. This characteristic has some drawbacks also, but generally the benefits outweigh the detriments.

It is probably worth mentioning that the color of the dogs selected has no bearing on the dog's working ability. Color varies considerably from breed to breed as well as within individual breeds.

Generally speaking, the dogs begin training at about one year of age. The dogs are usually put out into the field with a client at one-and-a-quarter to two years of age. Occasionally a dog may be kept longer, waiting for a particular type of client. Also, occasionally an older dog that has been out in the field but that has been returned for reasons other than work or health problems (e.g., dog's master dies)

might be put out once again with a particular client.

The expected working life of a guide-dog is about seven to ten years after which its work probably will begin to deteriorate due to age and/or health reasons. When a guide-dog does become too old for the work, the owner may keep the dog as a pet and obtain a new guide-dog from the school. If the owner does not wish to keep the old dog as a pet, he may return it to the guide-dog school from where it was originally obtained and the school will locate a home for it. (This policy may vary from school to school).

Male dogs and female dogs are used for the work and both are neutered prior to being sent into the field.

3. Mental characteristics (Temperament):

The mental characteristics of a given dog of acceptable physical standards are the most important determinants of the suitability of that dog for the work. Contrary to popular belief, exceptional intelligence is not a very important factor. So long as a dog is of average intelligence it will be smart enough to be trained for the work. In fact, if a dog is too intelligent, while it may be trained to do the work easily, it will probably require a very capable and knowledgeable master to keep it working properly.

The characteristics most sought after include such things as friendliness or love of people, willingness and desire to please, lack of aggressive tendencies both towards people and towards dogs, and, very importantly, a lack of anxiety in new, unusual, or stressful situations. Failure to meet rigid criterion for any of the above characteristics will usually result in the rejection of a dog from a

school's training program.

Dogs may be classified as "hard", "soft", or somewhere in between. A hard dog would be one that demonstrates much independence of will and that requires a strong physical correction if a correction is to be effective. A soft dog would be one that is very responsive to its master's will and that is likewise responsive to minimal physical or verbal correction. Dogs run the entire gamut from very soft to very hard and a dog that is either too hard or too soft may prove unsuitable for the work. On the other hand, there may be cases in which an unusually hard dog or an unusually soft dog may be just what is required for a particular client.

Frequently used terms that categorize guide-dogs according to work pattern and temperament are "man's dog", "woman's dog", or "flexible dog". The first two are actually misnomers. A man's dog usually refers to a hard dog with a fast pace and a strong pull. A woman's dog usually refers to a soft dog with a slower pace and less pull. A flexible dog is just what the name implies, a dog that will work with a variety of people and adjust to the requirements of the individual. Recently, with the advent of feminism and some changes in the population being serviced, guide-dog schools have been more accuratly categorizing their dogs as "strong dogs" and "easy dogs" or "strong person's dog" and "weak person's dog".

4. Care:

a. Food and water: The dog should be fed either once or twice daily, depending on the preference of the master. If the dog is fed twice daily, the feedings should be at least 4 hours apart. The time of

day of feeding can accommodate the master's schedule, but once a schedule is established it is best to stick with it if at all possible. Also, it should be remembered that feeding time will, to a certain degree, determine parking times. The dog may either be allowed free access to water or be given water periodically at least four times each day.

Any good, nutritionally balanced, commercial dry dog food, or kibble, is recommended. If the owner wishes, canned dog food can be used also but it is not recommended that the canned food exceed one-half the total ration as it is much more expensive and may not be as nutritionally sound as the kibble. The kibble can be fed dry or moistened with warm water. If the kibble is fed dry, water should be provided for the dog afterwards. Since the dog is working, a kibble of at least 20% protein is indicated.

The amount of food given will vary from dog to dog depending upon individual size and the amount of daily work or exercise. Very generally speaking, the average guide-dog will consume about 2 lbs. of kibble each day. A 1-lb. coffee can or 1 quart container is a good approximation to one pound of dry food. If the dog appears to be gaining or losing an inordinate amount of weight, the ration can be adjusted accordingly. However, it should be noted that loss of weight is not always caused by a lack of food. Again generally speaking, any weight change that necessitates changing the harness girth buckle more than one or two notches is an inordinate amount of change.

Bones are not recommended. Dog biscuits are fine as treats but must not be used as reward.

The approximate cost of 25 lbs. of dry dog food is $5 - $7. (As of

9/1/79).

b. Grooming: A guide-dog should be thoroughly groomed once each day. This means first combing and then brushing the dog properly each day. The entire process requires about five to fifteen minutes. If a dog is groomed properly it will be clean and relatively free of dog odor.

Grooming should be done systematically from head to tail and lightly underneath. The comb and the brush are pulled firmly with the grain, or direction, of the hair. The comb removes the fine under-coat hair and the brush removes loose outer-coat hair. After brushing, the dog should be rubbed with the hands from head to tail in order to help spread natural oil secreted by the skin.

A properly groomed dog will require bathing very rarely. Usually, bathing is recommended only twice a year, once in the spring and once in the fall, when the dog begins shedding heavily, as bathing facilitates the shedding process. Perhaps it should be mentioned that dogs shed continuously throughout the year but to a much greater degree in the spring and sometimes in the autumn. When bathing, warm water and a mild soap or shampoo is recommended. Eyes and ears must be carefully avoided by the soap.

Toenails usually take care of themselves by wearing down on concrete sidewalks. However, dogs that are "down in the pastern" (look like they have weak ankles) may not wear their toenails down adequately. If toenails appear excessively long they should be periodically clipped either by a veterinarian or by a professional dog groomer.

c. Parking: The term "parking" a dog refers to the process of

allowing the dog to relieve bowel and bladder functions. With guide-dogs this must be a controlled and scheduled process, i.e. the dog must relieve itself where and when the master permits.

The dog must be allowed a minimum of 4 park times each day. Usually these times are: morning, after first awakening; noon or early afternoon; early evening; and just before retiring for the night. Allowing fewer than 4 park times may result in "accidents" inside or on-route parking. More than 4 park times may be required or allowed as desired. It should be mentioned that dogs, even male dogs, do not require the frequent urination that is often observed among pet and stray dogs. "Marking" every tree or fire hydrant is merely a way in which a dog stakes out its territory and perhaps its trail. While this may be a useful "orientation" method for a dog, it is not necessary and should not be tolerated.

When establishing a schedule for parking, it should be remembered that, in dogs of the size that are used, 4 to 6 hours are generally required for food to pass through the digestive system. This does not mean that a dog cannot go for more than 6 hours without relieving itself. But it does mean that a dog should be allowed an opportunity to park 5 to 6 hours or more after its last meal to assure that this meal has passed through. In other words, if a dog's last feeding of the day is at 4 P.M., the dog should be allowed an opportunity to park sometime after 9 P.M. before the master retires for the night. If not, the master may find his night's sleep disturbed. Quantity of food, as well as time of feeding is also a factor in determining when and how often a dog must be parked.

Parking may be done with the dog on a leash, on a yard chain, or in a securely fenced area. It is easiest if specific park areas can be established and regularly used. Dogs will park on any type of surface required, e.g. grass, dirt, concrete, asphalt, etc. The park area should be established for the convenience of the master. It should be noted that how well a person establishes and stays with a specific routine may determine whether or not he will have a problem with accidents or inconvenient parkings.

One final point. A guide-dog must never be allowed to run free in an unfenced area. Often guide-dogs lose all responsibility and concern for traffic when they are not in harness. Consequently, they can very easily be hit by a car if they are permitted to run loose in an unfenced area.

d. General health: Naturally, the health care of a dog is the responsibility of its owner and its veterinarian. However, there may be occasions when the O & M specialist will be in a position to notice certain symptoms of ill health in the dog that the master is not aware of. Rather than attempt to list all the possible health problems along with their associated causes and cures, we will describe the appearance and signs of a healthy dog. Suffice it to say that any significant divergence from the norm should be brought to the attention of the owner with a possible recommendation that a veterinarian and the guide-dog school be consulted.

The Healthy Dog:

Eyes: clear, bright, no constant or excessive discharge.

Ears: clean (inside), no foul odor or excessive shaking of head or

scratching.

Nose: moist and cool, no discharge. (However, a dry or warm nose alone does not necessarily indicate ill health.)

Coat: smooth, clean, shiny, even. Coat thickness and texture will vary from dog to dog and with seasonal change.

Skin: generally not visible except on underside of upper legs and lower part of belly, dandruff free, no excessive itching, no foul odor, no external parasites.

Gait: should be even and normal for the individual dog, no limping.

Appetite: should be normal for the individual dog under that dog's normal circumstances.

Feces: solid and formed (may vary somewhat according to diet and individual metabolism), no blood visible, no worms visible.

Urine: clear, yellow, no sign of blood or mucous discharge.

Miscellaneous: no unusual bumps, lumps, or traumatic injuries.

Common sense should be used at all times. For example, occasional light dandruff or an occasional loose stool are not necessarily reasons for undue concern. Excessive loss of coat (not due to seasonal shedding) or frequent diarrhea would be valid causes for concern. If you are unsure, check with the guide-dog school from which the dog came. Explain the situation and ask for further instructions or advice.

B. The Equipment Used

1. Collar:

The collar that is used in guide-dog work is known as the "choke-chain", "slip-chain", or "chain training collar". It consists merely

of a length of narrow chain with larger round rings attached to each end. To make the chain into a collar, the chain is pushed through one ring until both rings meet. Do not try to pass one ring through the other because both rings have the same diameter. From now on we will refer to this type of collar as simply the "collar".

The collar is used as the principal instrument for transmitting a correction to the dog. In order to function in this capacity it must be capable of tightening and loosening quickly about the dog's neck. This capacity is dependent upon the following factors: 1) Fit. The collar must be neither too large nor too small. A hand held flat should be able to pass between the collar and the dog's neck. The collar should be able to pass comfortably over the dog's head, but should not slip up on the dog's ears when the dog's neck is bent down to the ground. 2) The leash must be attached to the ring that will tighten the collar when it is pulled. This ring is called the "live" ring and the chain beginning at the live ring and going around the dog's neck is called the "running" part of the collar. The other ring is called the "dead" ring. 3) The collar must be placed on the dog correctly in order to function properly. When the dog is standing on the side of its handler on which it usually works, facing the same direction as its handler, the running part of the collar should appear to pass through the dead ring and <u>over</u> the dog's neck. (See plate #1a.). If the collar is on correctly, it will tighten when the live ring is pulled and slacken when the tension is released. If the collar is on incorrectly, it will not slacken enough, or at all, even though the tension is released and subsequent corrections will be hampered.

PLATE #1.

a. CORRECT COLLAR

b. INCORRECT COLLAR

2. Leash:

The leash that is used is approximately 5 feet in length and is made of leather or some other suitable material. Many guide-dog schools have found a double-ended leash, that is a leash with snaps at both ends, to be most convenient. With suitable "O" rings placed in the proper places, a double-ended leash can be used in the following ways: 1) Full length for use in obedience exercises and when parking the dog. 2) Doubled over and coupled together for use when working or heeling the dog.

The leash at full length is called the "long" leash. The doubled-over leash is called the "short" or "working" leash. The long leash allows the dog and master to place greater distance between themselves when desired or required. The short, or working, leash facilitates manipulation when heeling, working, or correcting the dog.

The leash attaches to the live ring on the dog's collar and is held in the left hand along with the harness handle when working or in the left hand alone, that is, without the handle, when heeling. The leash should be slack but not sloppy and should not interfere with the dog or master.

3. Harness and harness handle:

The guide-dog harness, that is used to transmit the dog's body movements into useable information for the blind master, is actually made up of two distinct parts: the flexible harness body or "harness", and the rigid harness handle or "handle".

The harness body is actually several pieces of leather or reinforced leather fastened together. It consists of a back-piece or back-plate

that goes across the dog's back, a breast-piece or breast-plate that goes across the dog's chest and a girth that goes from the back-piece around and under the dog's stomach where it is buckled together via a belt buckle. In addition, some dog schools prefer a harness that has a martingale, which is merely a strap of looped leather fastened to the center of the chest-plate, passing between the dog's forelegs, and held into place by passing the girth through it before fastening the girth. "O" rings are fastened to the sides of the breast-plate and leather loops called "monkey ears" may be fastened where the back-piece and breast-plate join together.

The harness-handle is made of a rigid metal rod formed in the shape of a squared-off V with strong snaps on each leg of the V and covered with a suitable material, usually leather, plastic, or rubber. The handle is attached to the harness body by passing the legs through the harness monkey ears and attaching the snaps to the "O" rings. The mouths of the snaps should face up when this is done so that there is less chance of them becoming inadvertently unfastened. Some schools use a harness with a permanently attached handle.

The use of a flexible body and a rigid handle allows the dog comfort and freedom of movement while providing the master with accurate information concerning directional movements, speed changes, and stops.

The handle is normally gripped with the left hand, i.e. the dog is on the master's left side. The handle is gripped in an overhand fashion; that is, the hand is pronated with the fingers and thumb flexed around the top of the handle (the base of the "V").

4. Muzzle:

A muzzle is a device that restrains a dog from opening its mouth. (If a dog cannot open its mouth, it cannot bite anyone.) Muzzles are used in conjunction with guide-dogs almost exclusively to meet legal requirements in particular situations. They should not be taken as an indication that guide-dogs are, in any way, aggressive. Guide-dogs accompanying their masters are allowed, by law, in a variety of public places and facilities where pet dogs are prohibited. However, often the proprietor or operator of the facility has the legal right to demand that the dog be muzzled.

Two types of muzzles are available. The first is the cage-type or box-type muzzle. This muzzle consists of a small cage, made of leather, plastic, covered wire, or other suitable material, that fits snuggly over the dog's snout and mouth and is fastened with a strap around the dog's neck and behind its ears. The second type of muzzle is the strap-muzzle. This muzzle consists merely of a leather strap with a buckle at one end and a small leather loop near the buckle. By passing the end of the strap through the loop (not the buckle) the strap can be tightened around the dog's neck as a collar might be. The remaining length of the strap is then wrapped around the dog's snout and mouth and fastened to the buckle.

A strap-muzzle is convenient since it is light, flexible, and fits easily into a pocket or purse. A persistent dog, however, can often remove a strap-muzzle if its master is not attentive and it is not as strong as a cage-muzzle. For the overwhelming majority of guide-dogs the strap-muzzle is adequate, convenient, and will meet all legal

requirements.

A guide-dog user should always carry a muzzle with him if there is any chance that he may be in a situation where one is required.

5. Grooming equipment:

The only grooming equipment required for most dogs is a metal comb and a wire brush known as a slicker or slicker brush.

The comb is used first to remove the fine under-coat hair. It is used with short, firm strokes, combing in the same direction in which the hair lies. Combing should be done systematically from head to tail.

The slicker is used second to remove the heavier hair from the outer coat. It is used by holding it by its handle and pulling it in the same direction in which the hair lies. Firm, short or medium length strokes should be used. Again, the brushing should be done systematically.

While firm pressure should be used with both comb and brush, care must be taken not to apply undue pressure which may result in discomfort or physical irritation to the dog. Particular care must be taken on the inside of the dog's legs, and near its ears and genitalia.

A softer nylon and brass bristly brush, similar to a human military brush, often called a boxer brush, may be required for dogs with very short coats (e.g. a boxer). In this type of coat there is no need for combing and a slicker brush may prove to be irritating unless very light pressure is applied. The boxer brush is firm enough to do the job and yet soft enough not to be irritating.

6. Night-chain or down-chain:

The night-chain, or down-chain is a simple but very useful device.

It consists of a length of narrow chain, about 2 - 3 feet in length, with a large "O" ring connected to one end and a narrow snap attached to the other. The diameter of the "O" ring must be wide enough to allow the snap and chain to pass through its center. By placing the chain around any vertical pole or post in the environment and then passing the snap through the center of the "O" ring and pulling the chain tight, the down-chain can be secured in many different places. The snap is fastened to the live ring on the dog's collar whenever it is desired to secure the dog in one place. Vertical posts that may be used may be such things as table legs, desk legs, bed legs, banister supports, etc. The down-chain is often found to be very handy in work, school, and home situations.

7. Food and water dishes:

Food and water dishes should be approximately 2 - 4 quarts in volume. They should be made of a non-breakable, non-porous material that is able to withstand high water temperatures during washings. Likewise, the material should not rust or corrode. The dishes should have a flat bottom and a wide, open top. Food dishes should be thoroughly washed after each feeding. Water dishes should be washed or rinsed out daily when the water is changed.

8. Dog towel:

It is recommended that the guide-dog user carry a dog towel with him whenever he travels in inclement weather or when there is much snow or water on the streets and sidewalks. A dog towel may be any piece of water absorbent material that is available. For convenience, the dog towel is usually about the size of a face or hand towel. A larger

towel works better but is more cumbersome.

A dog towel serves two purposes at once. It dries the dog, which makes the dog more comfortable, and it reduces the likelihood that the dog will leave a messy wet spot where it chooses to sit or lie down. If a wet spot is made, the dog towel can be used to wipe it up.

9. Plastic bags:

Finally, some mention should be made of the usefulness of plastic bags or "baggies" to guide-dog users or anyone else who works frequently with dogs. Plastic bags are a very efficient way of transporting any unsanitary solid matter, be it hair from grooming, regurgitated food, or fecal matter, and depositing it in an appropriate area or receptacle. Bags are especially useful in the absence of a shovel or hoe and they do a lot to help maintain a good public image. Obviously, plastic bags represent some of the less glamourous aspects of work with guide-dogs.

C. The Training that the Dogs Receive

Dogs usually begin training at approximately one year of age. Dogs may come either from the school's own breeding program or they may be acquired from an outside source. If a dog comes from a specific breeding program it is usually placed in a foster home at about 2 months of age and remains there until 1 year of age. The purpose of the foster home is to give the dog a place in which it may be socialized to adults, children, and other animals. In addition, the foster family housebreaks the puppy, exposes it to many loud noises and different experiences, (e.g. cars, public transportation, shopping malls, etc.). Also, the foster family may teach the dog some rudiments of obedience such as come,

sit, down, and stay.

1. Dogs trained on the left side:

Traditionally, guide-dogs are taught to work and heel on the left side of their master. Most people are right-handed and by having the dogs on the left side, (i.e. harness handle and leash held in the left hand), the right hand is free to carry parcels, to shake hands, and to tactually explore objects when desired. There is no reason why a dog cannot be trained to work on the right side and indeed this is occasionally done to accommodate amputees or people with severe orthopedic problems on the left. The fact that a person may be left-handed is not deemed sufficient cause to specially train a dog to work on the right, and left-handed people seem to have no undue difficulty working a dog in the normal manner. Another reason for having the dog work on the left may be that in this position, oncoming traffic will be initially on the dog's side when a unit is crossing a two-way street. Historically, the reason dogs in general have been trained on the left has been to prevent interference with the gun in hunting situations. Unless otherwise noted, all procedures depicted in this manual will refer to dogs working on the left side of their master.

2. How dogs learn and retain:

In order to understand when and why a guide-dog is (or is not) working properly it is necessary to know something about how and why dogs learn and retain things. Basically, dogs learn through two modes: 1) psychological conditioning, and 2) repetition or rote. The psychological conditioning consists of both positive and negative reinforcement. That is, the dog is rewarded when it does something right and punished

when it does something wrong. Of course, before the conditioning is applied, the dog is usually shown what is expected of it. The rote learning consists of doing the same things or types of things over and over again in the same manner. When applied properly, the conditioning and rote learning combine to produce a definite work pattern, i.e. a predictable way in which a dog will behave and handle a variety of situations. A dog that handles required situations consistently well is said to have a good work pattern. One that is irregular or makes frequent mistakes is said to have a poor, or weak, work pattern. Usually, at least 3 - 4 months of training are required to establish a work pattern in a guide-dog.

Once a work pattern is established in a dog, it must be continually reinforced. Otherwise, it will deteriorate. Likewise, the more frequently a dog encounters a given situation and works it in a given manner, the more likely it will handle those situations in a predictable manner. This leads to two basic principles of training and working with guide-dogs: 1) continual reinforcement, which consists of balanced and appropriate praise (reward) and correction (punishment) and 2) consistent handling.

In guide-dog work it is also necessary that the dog use its own initiative at times. This quality will naturally vary from dog to dog but it can be brought out by positively reinforcing the dog's use of its initiative at appropriate times. Use of initiative may be required contrary to the stated command of the master if compliance with the command would place the master in danger. This type of initiative is often referred to as "intelligent disobedience".

3. Praise (reward):

Reward in guide-dog work consists primarily of verbal reward or praise. Occasionally physical reward, such as modest patting or scratching the dog with one's hand, is acceptable, usually to reinforce a new or difficult job well done. It is essential that the dog be praised immediately upon completion of a task or upon compliance with a command, otherwise the dog will not make the desired association. Also, at the conslusion of a lesson or route, abundant praise as well as some physical reward is given to the dog to keep it enthusiastic about the work.

Food reward is never used in conjunction with guide-dog work.

Praise consists of simply saying "good dog", "atta-boy", "thank you", or any such thing in a pleasant and enthusiastic tone of voice.

4. Correction (punishment):

Punishment in guide-dog work consists of a combination of a physical and a verbal correction. Verbal correction consists of the words "no" or "phooey" spoken in a harsh tone of voice that clearly conveys displeasure.

With the exception of very minor infractions, the verbal correction is always used simultaneously with a physical correction. Physical correction is primarily applied by means of the choke collar. By giving the live ring of the collar, or more probably the leash attached to the live ring, a quick jerk and release, a jolt is communicated to the dog that causes it minor momentary discomfort and serves effectively as an attention getting device. The severity of the correction is determined by the severity of the infraction and the personality of the

dog, i.e. whether the dog is hard or soft. It is important to note some particular aspects of this type of correction. First of all, a choke collar does not correct a dog by choking it. Pulling a collar tight around a dog's neck merely serves to strengthen that dog's neck by isometric contraction. This being the case, it is necessary that the collar and leash be loose, or slack, when not giving a correction so that by instantly removing the slack, by means of a quick jerk, the required jolt can be communicated to the dog's neck. No jolt can possibly be communicated through a tight collar and leash. Also, it is important that once a correction has been given, the leash and collar are immediately restored to the original slack state. This is impoartant so that subsequent or repeated corrections can be applied when needed. It should now be evident why it is so important that a dog's collar be the proper size and be placed on the dog in the correct manner.

Like praise, corrections must be administered at the exact moment a mistake or infraction occurs so that the proper association is made.

There are several methods of applying the basic leash correction to the dog. The correction may be applied with the left hand, the right hand, or with both hands.

a. Left-handed-leash correction: When working a guide-dog, a left handed correction is given by giving the leash a sharp jerk straight back with the left hand. This necessitates letting go of the harness handle when using this correction. (See plate #2a,b.)

b. Right-handed-leash-correction: When working a guide-dog, a right handed correction is given by taking the leash from the left hand with the right hand and giving it a sharp jerk back and to the

PLATE #2.

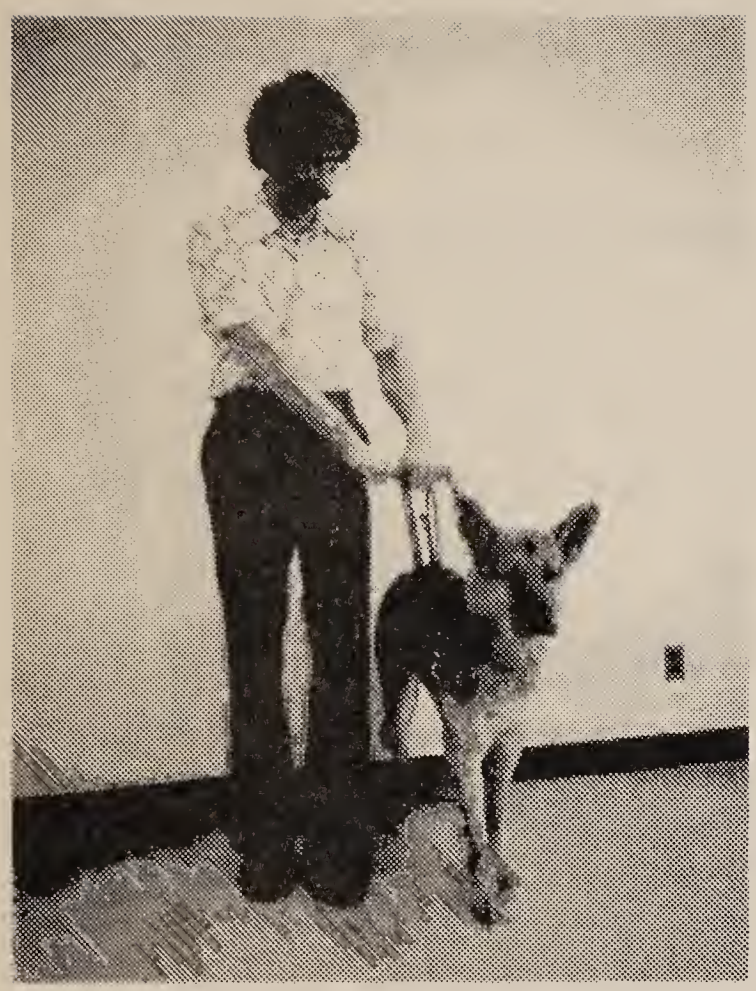
a. PROPER WORK POSITION

b. LEFT-HANDED LEASH CORRECTION

c. LEFT-HANDED LEASH CORRECTION

d. TWO-HANDED LEASH CORRECTION

PLATE #3.



RIGHT-HANDED LEASH CORRECTION

right side with the right hand. If the leash is normally held in the left hand with only two fingers then this correction can be applied without dropping the harness handle. (See plate #3). After the correction has been given, the leash is returned to the left hand.

c. Two-handed-leash-correction: A two handed correction is a severe correction that is occasionally required to deal with a severe infraction committed by a hard dog. The leash is taken in both hands and is jerked very sharply and repeatedly either straight up or to one side. (See plate #2d.)

Some schools tend to prefer the left handed correction over the right handed correction for all situations. Other schools use the left hand correction for some situations and the right hand correction for others.

The direct use of hands or feet for correction is not encouraged and very adverse reactions may result if they are used. Again, for both praise and correction, the proper timing and proper measure are of the utmost importance.

5. Commands:

a. Obedience: Once a dog begins its training, the first things it is taught are certain elements of basic obedience. The dog is taught to come, sit, lie down, and stay (in both sit and down position) on command. The commands used are "come", "sit", "down", and "stay". All commands that call the dog to action are prefaced with the dog's name so that the complete command would be "Juno come", "Juno sit", "Juno down", but "stay" (not "Juno stay") since stay does not call for action. All of these exercises are self-explanatory but it should be mentioned

that "come" consists of having the dog come to its handler and get into the proper starting work position on its handler's left side. For those familiar with competitive obedience, it is almost a combination recall and finish. The come exercise is used whenever it is necessary to get the dog into or back into the proper work position.

Some schools teach their dogs to fetch or retrieve dropped objects. This training begins at or near the other obedience training. The commands usually used are "fetch" or "take it" for the retrieve and "out" or "give" for the release.

Much later in the training program the dogs are taught to "heel" which means walking close to the handler's left side on a loose leash. (See plate #4c.)

All obedience exercises are subsequently performed routinely as a preliminary to the actual work or on route training. They are also individually employed as specific situations demand.

b. Work: The first thing that the dogs must be taught, regarding the actual work, is to consistently lead, or pull-out, on command. The dog is taught to do this first on leash and then in harness. Just as a human sighted-guide must step out on his own initiative in order to be perceived as a guide, so must a guide-dog pull against the harness in order to be perceived as a guide. The command used to initiate the pulling is "forward", again preceded by the dog's name. Also, a hand signal, comprised of a flexed right forearm pointing forward, is given. (See plate #7c.)

The dogs are also taught to take directional commands such as "left" or "right". Again, these commands are preceded by the dog's name

and accompanied by a flexed forearm hand signal pointing in the appropritae direction. (See plate #8).

"Hop-up" or "hup-hup" is a multi-purpose command used in a variety of situations and it may mean such things as "pay attention", "go faster", "take another step or two", etc. The words "steady" or "easy" may also be used when desiring to slow the dog down. Some schools also like to use the command "halt" when stopping the dog.

6. Importance of voice tone and quality:

As with praise and correction, the tone and quality of the voice giving the command is of the utmost importance, especially initially. A command should always be given in a clear and definite manner, never questioningly or hesitantly. Once a command is given, the dog is expected to comply. If it does, it is praised. If it does not, it is corrected, but when compliance is attained then it is also praised.

7. Other actions the dog is, or is not, trained to do:

Once the dog has been introduced to the basic commands and directions of the work, it is taught to handle the various situations that comprise the work. First, it is taught to travel from street corner to street corner and to stop for curbs, steps, and drop-offs. Next, it is taught to give clearance, i.e. avoid obstacles and pedestrians in the line of travel. It is taught to avoid obstacles and overhangs when it is possible and to stop when it is not. The dogs are taught to come to a good part of the corner and to make proper street crossings on command. The dogs are taught proper respect for moving traffic and to refuse to move if the handler makes an unsafe traffic decision. The dogs are not taught to make primary traffic decisions, to read stop lights, to read

cross-walk signs, or to be responsible for orientation.

8. Use of realistic training situations and distractions:

During the course of training the dogs are exposed to and worked through the full range of circumstances that people normally function under. The dogs are worked in stores, coffee shops, and on public transportation. They must be able to successfully negotiate detoured sidewalks and to work reliably past noisy construction equipment. For the most part, training is done in cities or towns under real-life conditions. Only when a dog is not getting adequate work under a given situation will a trainer attempt to set up an artificial training situation.

A major advantage of real-life training situations is that the dog is frequently exposed to a variety of distractions, including people, machines, other dogs, and other animals. It is essential that guide-dogs work properly in the presence of these distractions and a dog that did not would be of little use and dropped from the training program.

Essentially then, a guide-dog is taught to take verbal direction and to negotiate a safe path; to give clearances for obstacles and pedestrians, to stop when inadequate clearances or dangerous situations arise, and to stop to indicate street curbs and steps. Street crossing decisions are the responsibility of the master, with the dog providing an extra measure of safety in the event of a judgement error. Likewise, since the dog must respond to the directions of the master, the master must be responsible for maintaining orientation. One does not merely tell the dog a desired destination and then simply hang on while the dog follows a complex route to that destination.

D. The Training that the Students Receive:

1. The type of training program:

Usually a guide-dog school student training program or "class" consists of a 3 - 4 week period of time during which time the students live at the guide-dog school. The common student/instructor ratio is about 6:1. One, two, three, or more classes may be run concurrently depending upon the individual school. Also, a class supervisor may be present much of the time and some schools now have a certified O & M specialist on staff as well. Room, board, and transportation costs are paid for by the school. A nominal fee of $100 - $200 may be charged by the school, but the terms of payment may be set by the student and, in most cases, the student is not denied a dog solely because he cannot pay the fee (providing he can demonstrate that he can adequately care for a dog).

2. Matching the student with a dog:

Since the guide-dog and master must function as a unit, it is essential that every student be properly matched with the correct dog so that they will complement each other, like each other, and be able to function as a team.

During his first day at a guide-dog school, the student is informed as to what to expect and what routines will be followed. He is briefly oriented to the facilities and grounds and he has time to unpack, settle in, and meet other students. During this first day, he is observed informally by the instructors and supervisor who must know certain aspects of his physical capabilities and his character. He will also be given a formal evaluation or "test walk" during which the

instructor will domonstrate the proper use of the harness handle and leash, and the proper use of commands, praise, and corrections. The instructor will then play the role of the dog, traditionally named "Juno", and lead the student around by the harness handle. The instructor can then determine what type of dog the student requires by noting such things as how strong a pull is needed to lead the student, how fast or slow the student normally walks, how good the student's balance and agility are, how good his manual dexterity is, how well the student follows a guide, how good the student's overall orientation is, and what the individual's general personality is like. All this and more is measured in a matter of minutes by competent instructors.

After all students have been taken on test walks by each instructor, the instructors and supervisors sit down together to discuss their findings and to decide which dogs should be matched with which students. Normally, more dogs are available than are required at any one time so that some leeway is provided in order to assure that the proper dog is matched with the proper student.

3. Learning to care for and work with the dogs:

Also on the first day, the students are told and shown some of the basics of dog care and handling. In essence, it is the goal of the instructor to make the student into something of a dog trainer so that in the future the student will be able to keep the dog working properly. The student must also learn to function effectively with a dog-guide and he must learn how to handle his dog when it is not being used as a guide.

On the second or third day of the program, the student is presented

with his dog and they are given a quiet period together to get acquainted with each other. From this point on, dog and student are together almost 24 hours a day for at least the next two weeks. This is necessary in order to facilitate the attachment that will hopefully develop between the student and the dog. It is also necessary to give the instructor the opportunity to teach the student how to handle many common, but non-working, situations that will arise in the future.

Formal route work begins the next day. The student learns how to direct and to "follow" a guide-dog. He learns how to make turns and what it feels like when the dog stops for curbs or avoids obstacles. Next, the student learns how to make street crossings. Initially the routes are simple and quiet. The instructor stays very close and assists with any problems. At this point, in fact, the dog is usually still working for the instructor rather than actually working for the student.

Gradually, as dog and student gain more confidence in each other, the routes are increased in length and difficulty. As the instructor gains confidence in the unit, he will wean himself from it and will eventually intervene only when absolutely necessary. Also, if for any reason during the first week it appears that the dog and student have been mismatched, the dog may be replaced with little detriment to the training schedule.

As with the dog training, an attempt is made to expose the student to all types of common work situations and problems. Again, almost all training is done under real circumstances with artificial situations being created only when needed to assure adequate exposure to given

situations.

By the end of the class the student should have a good understanding of how to function with a guide-dog and how to care for the dog as well. Master and dog should be functioning as a unit. While it is not possible to expose the student to every situation he may meet at home, he should have a good idea how his dog will react to various situations and how to deal with these types of situations when they arise.

It should be noted that days at a guide-dog school begin early in the morning and do not end until about 8 or 9 P.M. Work usually takes place six or seven days a week, and in all kinds of weather.

It should be noted that the main emphasis of the student's training is placed on how to handle and care for the dog. Little or no teaching is done on orientation techniques, per se.

4. Follow-up and refresher courses:

Occasionally, expected and unexpected problems arise after the student leaves the school and returns home. Often these problems resolve themselves in short order or with the help of a letter or telephone call to the school. In the situations where the need is great enough, most schools make provisions for an instructor or supervisor to visit the former student and to assist him with his difficulties.

Also, some schools make provisions for former students having special difficulties to return to the school and attend an abbreviated "refresher" course during which time his particular problem will be given individual attention.

Naturally, individual follow-up service cannot be provided to

every student for every minor problem that arises, despite the fact that solving minor problems may prevent major problems from arising. Therefore, this is one of the areas where we feel that well informed O & M specialists can provide an invaluable service to both guide-dog school and guide-dog user.

PART TWO

COMMON AND UNCOMMON SITUATIONS AND PROBLEMS AND HOW THEY ARE HANDLED

INTRODUCTION

The material presented in this part is set forth primarily as background material so that the O & M instructor will have a better idea about how various problems and situations are corrected or handled. There may be times when it will be necessary or desirable for an O & M instructor to work with a guide-dog user and some of the situations described in this part may present themselves. Therefore, we will outline some basic rules that justify intervention with a guide-dog unit and some additional rules describing how anyone observing or working with a guide-dog unit should act. Nevertheless, it is of utmost importance that any O & M instructor working with or planning to work with a guide-dog unit follow normal professional communication courtesies and contact the appropriate guide-dog school prior to attempting any remedial work.

A. Basic Rules

Before attempting to understand and deal with the various types of situations and problems that may arise in conjunction with guide-dog use, it is important that the O & M specialist understand some fundamental rules outlining the criterion for possible intervention with a unit. There are, basically, three types of situations that justify intervention by an O & M instructor with a working guide-dog unit in the field. They are:

1. Intervention in response to immediate danger.

2. Intervention in response to a request by the individual guide-dog user.

3. Intervention in response to a request by a guide-dog school.

Furthermore, there are some basic ground rules that should be obeyed by anyone observing or working with a guide-dog unit. They are:

a. Don't interfere with success. Each unit will develop its own style and pattern of work. So long as a unit functions safely and effectively there is no justification for intervention. Units can often function very effectively despite the fact that one or the other partner, or both, may be doing things that are technically incorrect.

b. Don't interfere with the dog. If it is determined that some type of intervention is justified and necessary, the instructor, in this case the O & M specialist, should never interfere with the dog. The responsibility for handling the dog, including directing, praising, and correcting, must rest solely with the dog's master. The instructor would give verbal instructions, suggestions, and directions to the master.

c. Notify the guide-dog school when in doubt. Should the O & M instructor have any question about what is occurring in a particular situation or about how to handle a particular problem or group of problems, the guide-dog school from which the dog was obtained should again be contacted directly and asked for specific recommendations. Written or telephone communication may be all that is required. Video tapes or movies, accompanied by a letter or tape recording, of the unit working and showing the problems in question, are another excellent way of communicating with the school.

Any direct communication with a guide-dog school about a particular

unit should be done with that person's knowledge and permission.

B. Proper Work Patterns

In order to understand the causes and remedies of various work problems that arise it is necessary to have an understanding of the various factors that contribute to the formation and maintenance of proper work patterns.

1. The proper role of each partner:

The proper role of each partner in the unit must be clearly understood. It is the responsibility of the master to have and to maintain orientation: to know where he wants to go and how to get there; to give commands and directions to the dog and to make traffic decisions. It is the responsibility of the dog to negotiate the directed course safely and to refuse commands when they are based upon unsafe decisions.

2. Consistent handling:

Consistent handling is very important in establishing a good work pattern. If a dog is handled inconsistently it will become confused, not know what is expected of it, and may easily become worried, anxious, or indecisive. A dog that is handled in a consistent manner will soon adjust to that manner even if some aspects of that manner are technically incorrect.

3. Adequate dog-understanding:

Adequate dog-understanding is also important. The master must have some knowledge of how a dog thinks and learns (see Part I, Sec. C.2.), and base his actions accordingly.

4. Balanced and appropriate praise and correction:

Balanced and appropriate praise and correction are necessary. Praise and correction are both metered out in accordance with the nature of the situation and the character of the dog. The master must be careful not to praise the dog for an infraction. Likewise, he must not correct a dog when it is he, and not the dog, who is at fault (e.g. the dog stops at a downcurb but the master does not). Also, it should be noted that after a correction, the dog is usually still praised once it complies or does the correct thing.

5. Correct use of voice and hand signals:

Correct use of voice and hand signals is a very important factor. The master's voice should always be clearly audible to the dog. Obviously, the intensity required for this will be different in different situations. A command is given in a clear, decisive voice. Praise is given in a pleasant and happy voice. Correction is given in a firm, harsh voice. Clear, distinct hand signals serve to re-emphasize and re-inforce the commands.

6. Correct use of heeling and obedience exercises:

Correct use of heeling and obedience exercises is important. Heeling a dog relieves it of guiding responsibilities and avoids confusion when another mobility technique is being employed. Obedience exercises are used in practical situations when the dog is required to do specific things, e.g. lie down under a table. Also, by routinely going through obedience exercises, the dog is reminded that the master is the boss and to be obeyed, which leads to better overall control in all situations.

PLATE #4.

a. PROPER WORK POSITION (FRONT)

b. PROPER WORK POSITION (SIDE)

c. CORRECT HEEL

d. INCORRECT HEEL

PLATE #5.

a. INCORRECT POSITION -
DOG TOO FAR AHEAD

b. INCORRECT POSITION -
MASTER AHEAD OF DOG

c. INCORRECT POSITION -
DOG TOO FAR TO THE SIDE.
MASTER NOT FOLLOWING WELL.

7. Correct hand position; proper pace and pull and following:

(See plates #4 & 5). The situation here is analagous to the sighted-guide technique in O & M. If the user is not in the proper position relative to his (dog) guide he will have a difficult time interpreting the information transmitted to him. Likewise, if the dog-guide moves either too fast or too slow or does not exert the correct amount of pull required by the individual, the person may have a difficult time obtaining needed information. Conversely, a guide may give the proper information but the individual may fail to follow or otherwise react properly in accordance with that information.

Exclusion of any of the above points mentioned may lead to a deterioration in the unit's work pattern and result in specific problems. This is particularly, (though not exclusively), true for new dogs in the field.

C. Basic Problems - Orientation and Control.

Problems that arise with guide-dog users usually fall into one of three different categories. The categories are: 1) orientation problems, 2) control problems, and 3) work problems.

1. Orientation problems:

Basic orientation problems are frequently the basis of many problems that guide-dog users encounter. To the uninitiated observer, unacquainted with how a guide-dog functions, it often appears that the dog is not working properly when in reality it is the master that is not working properly. On the other hand, a dog's mistake is more easily recognized and corrected when the master is oriented to his environment.

The O & M specialist is in an ideal position to assist with orien-

tation problems that may arise with guide-dog users. Basic orientation problems should be dealt with initially without the dog. A long cane may be used but it must be remembered that a dog user will not encounter the same tactual clues and landmarks that a cane traveler will, e.g. shorelines, texture differences, etc. For this reason it is extremely important that emphasis be placed on auditory clues, gradients, traffic patterns and alignment, compass direction, and soliciting aid. Working on problems sighted-guide, or using the harness with the O & M instructor in place of the dog, can be very beneficial. (See plate #10.) As the client progresses, the dog should be reintroduced with the O & M instructor observing and giving verbal assistance and information when necessary. It should be emphasized to the guide-dog user that he is to apply all appropriate orientation techniques even when he is working with his dog since it is the master, and not the dog, who is responsible for maintaining orientation. Remember that the dog should be placed at sit when waiting during prolonged conversations.

2. Control problems:

Control problems refer to that set of problems in which the dog acts according to its own wishes and desires rather than acting according to the wishes and needs of its master. Examples might include such things as dogs that pull too hard, dogs that yield to distractions, dogs that don't heel properly, dogs that don't remain in a down position when their masters require it, dogs that don't pay proper attention to work situations, etc. The line between control problems and work problems is not always distinct and often times control problems will result in or contribute to work problems.

The cause of control problems usually can be found to be the result of: a. inconsistent handling, and/or b. lack of dog understanding.

a. Inconsistent handling: As mentioned before, inconsistent handling will result in confusion in a dog. If a dog is praised for doing something sometimes and corrected for doing the same thing at other times it might as well do what it likes since it has an equal chance of doing right. Or it might just act out of desperation and anxiety.

b. Lack of dog understanding: If a person lacks dog understanding he may often not praise and correct a dog when necessary. He may find or make excuses for the dog's misbehavior rather than attempt to remedy it. Also in this category are found people who just can't bring themselves to correct or "hurt" the "poor little puppy-dog". Obviously a dog that knows it can get away with things will continue to do so, regardless of attachment to its master.

Distractions caused by other animals or people also fall under the classification of control problems. Different dogs will react differently to the presence of other animals or people and they must be handled accordingly. A working-dog that gives in to the temptation of a distraction deserves a stiff correction. However, the master must not contribute to the problem in such ways as allowing the dog to play with other dogs or to receive excessive human attention while in harness.

The remedy for control problems usually lies in the proper application of appropriate corrections and praise in accordance with consistent handling and proper dog understanding. Also, the implemen-

tation of the daily routine of obedience exercises will help minimize control problems. For a unit having difficulty with control problems, it may be useful for the unit to go through its daily obedience routine just prior to beginning work. The master should be precise and demanding with his dog.

D. Common Work Problems.

The format used in this section will be that of first describing the correct way of working the given situation, then describing the problems that may occur, and finally, describing ways of remediating the problems, keeping in mind that different schools may do things somewhat differently and that any advice received directly from a guide-dog school should take precedence over suggestions in this manual. First however, we will describe how a unit would work a two block rectangular route on an idealized run.

Let us begin with the unit on the Northeast corner of a block (Southwest corner of the intersection) and facing South. To begin traveling, the master tells the dog, "Juno, forward", and gives the appropriate hand signal (see Part I sec. C.5.b.). As soon as the dog complies and begins going forward, the master praises, "Good dog". The unit then proceeds South until it comes to the first downcurb, at which point the dog stops and the master locates the down curb with his lead foot and praises the dog for stopping, "Good dog". The unit is well aligned and in a good position for crossing the street. The master listens for traffic, makes his decision, and commands the dog, "Juno, forward". Again, as soon as the dog steps out and the unit begins to cross the

street the master praises the dog, "Good dog". The unit crosses the street and the dog stops to indicate the upcurb. The master locates the upcurb with his lead foot and again praises the dog. Immediately, the master gives another forward command and the unit continues its travel South. At the next downcurb, after locating the curb and praising the dog, the decision is made to turn West. The master commands the dog, "Juno, right" and again gives the appropriate hand signal. The dog leads right and the master praises and follows. The unit then proceeds one block West. At the next downcurb, the decision is made to turn North, so again the master commands the dog, "Juno, right" and again he praises the dog as soon as a right turn is made. The unit then proceeds North for two blocks, crossing the street in between, just as it did before. At the next downcurb the unit must turn right again, so the master gives the appropriate command and the unit heads East until it arrives at the Northeast corner of the original block again (Southwest corner of the original intersection).

Several things are important to note. First of all, there are four parts to each command: 1) the dog's name; 2) the verbal command; 3) the appropriate hand signal; and 4) the praise. Second, the downcurb is always located before a turn is made. This is done to help the master to maintain his orientation and to prevent the dog from developing the habit of turning whenever it comes upon a perpendicular sidewalk or from following a building line. Third, the dog is always praised when it indicates an obstacle, curb, or any danger on route.

Now that we have an idea how an idealized route would be run, let us look at some of the problems that may arise.

1. Approaches to downcurbs at corners:

Correct approach: The unit approaches in a straight line, or as near a straight line as possible, and stops upon reaching the downcurb. The exact position at the corner will depend upon the location of various obstacles, pedestrians, and crosswalks, but in general, the unit should be in a good position for crossing the perpendicular street.

Common problems: a. The unit rounds the corner and follows the perpendicular sidewalk or building line rather than locating the proper downcurb. b. The unit makes a straight approach to the proper downcurb but fails to stop at the downcurb. c. The unit stops far short of the proper downcurb.

Remediation: a. Rounding of corners may result from a variety of reasons. The dog may anticipate the direction of travel or it may be distracted by something around the corner. The corner may be a gradual one. A person trying to listen to the building line may inadvertently turn rather than maintain his direction of travel. Usually, it is a combination of the dog not going to the desired place on the downcurb along with the master allowing or being unaware of the turn until it is too late. Often this problem can be corrected simply by having the master pay close attention to his orientation, by monitoring parallel and perpendicular traffic, as he approaches downcurbs. He should side-step around obstacles with his dog but he must not change his direction of travel. If the dog anticipates a turn and attempts to round the corner the master should hold his ground, firmly keep his left hand at his side, and correct the dog verbally saying, "No! Hop-up". When the dog arrives at the proper downcurb it is generously praised.

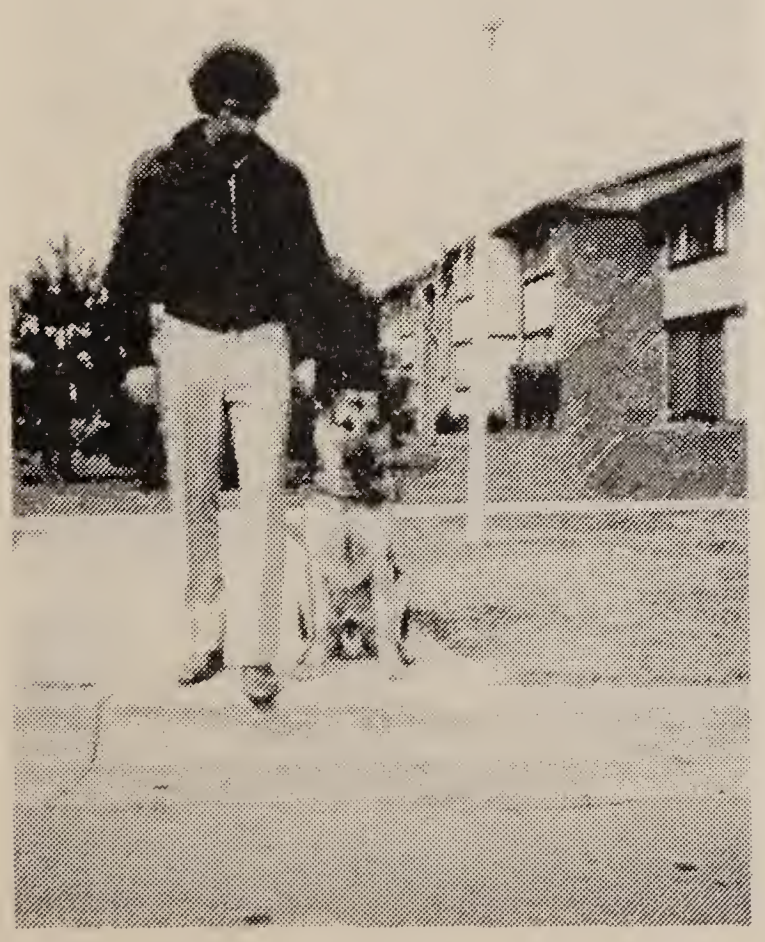
If a dog has acquired the habit of frequently rounding corners, a procedure of re-working the corner may be employed but this procedure requires the use of a sighted assistant. As soon as the master becomes aware (or is made aware) that he has rounded a corner, he immediately stops, drops the harness handle and gives the dog a left-handed leash correction if he is rounding to the right, or gives a right-handed leash correction if he is rounding to the left. He then heels the dog, with the aid of the sighted-guide, to the desired position on the corner downcurb where he has his dog sit and where he praises his dog. He then back-traces his route a few yards, again with the aid of the guide if necessary and the dog still at heel, and proceeds to re-work the approach to the intended downcurb. When the dog locates the desired position on the downcurb it is praised effusively.

b. A unit that fails to stop at a downcurb is usually the result of inattention to duties on the part of the dog and this problem is remediated by correcting and re-working as follows (see plates #6 & 7): 1. As soon as the master stops or stumbles off the downcurb, he drops the harness handle and gives the dog a left-handed leash correction. 2. He then steps back up on the curb and uses the "come" exercise to get his dog in the proper position at his side. The dog is placed at sit at the downcurb and with the master identifying the curb by tapping his foot on it, the dog is praised. 3. Heeling the dog, the master backs away from the downcurb and again uses the "come" exercise to properly place the dog. 4. The master then picks up the harness handle and re-works the approach to the downcurb. When the downcurb is stopped for and located, the dog is praised generously. The logic behind this

PLATE #6.

REWORKING MISSED CURB

a. STEP 1.
AS THE UNIT STEPS OFF A MISSED CURB, THE MASTER RELEASES THE HARNESS-HANDLE AND GIVES A LEFT-HANDED LEASH CORRECTION.



b. STEP 2.
MASTER STEPS BACK UP ON CURB. USING THE "COME" EXERCISE, HE POSITIONS THE DOG AT THE PROPER PLACE AND MAKES THE DOG SIT. THE CURB IS IDENTIFIED BY TAPPING IT WITH THE LEAD FOOT AND THE DOG IS PRAISED.

REWORKING MISSED CURB (CONTD.)

c. STEP 3.
MASTER STEPS BACK A FEW PACES (HOLDING THE LEASH ONLY) AND HAS DOG "COME" TO PROPER WORK POSITION. HANDLE IS PICKED UP AND DOG IS COMMANDED "FORWARD".

d. STEP 4.
UNIT WORKS TO THE CURB.
DOG STOPS CORRECTLY.
MASTER PRAISES DOG.

procedure is as follows: 1. The dog is corrected for its mistake. 2. The dog is shown what is expected of it and that it will be rewarded for correct performance. 3. The dog is made to re-work the situation and 4. The dog is rewarded for successful completion of the task. In general, this is the logic that accompanies most "correct and re-work" type situations. Please note, the correction and reworking must take place immediately upon the occurrence of an infraction and should take less than a minute to complete. It does absolutely no good to correct (or praise) a dog several minutes after something has happened.

c. A dog that stops far short of the desired downcurb may be the result of over-correction for an occasional missed curb; of anticipation of the master stumbling at the downcurb; or of anticipation or indication, by the dog, of a direction change. When the master fails to locate the downcurb with his lead foot he should check for barrier and over-hang type obstacles by extending his right arm straight ahead and checking an arc from above his head down to his knees. If there are none, he should rebuke the dog saying, "No! Hop-up". Upon locating the downcurb he should generously praise the dog. It is important that the dog receive no unwarranted positive reinforcement for stopping much earlier than he should. Likewise, it is important that the dog have no negative associations with the downcurb but rather it should have positive ones. This is why the dog is praised when it is placed at sit at a curb in the process of re-working a missed downcurb. It is also why it is important that the master be alert and attentive to his guide so that he stops, and does not stumble, when the dog stops to accurately indicate a downcurb.

2. Turns:

Usually, most people are competent in making turns with their dogs by the time they have completed the training course at the school. Occasionally problems do arise as a result of an individual forgetting what he has learned or being sloppy in his application of technique.

a. Right turns (see plate #8a.):

Correct right turn: From the proper work position, the master brings back his lead foot about even with his other foot. Simultaneously, the master gives the dog the command and hand signal for a right turn. Allowing the dog to precede slightly, the unit then turns to the right and the dog is praised.

Common problems: 1. The master neglects to bring his lead foot back, consequently denying the dog any room to maneuver. 2. The dog is distracted or for some unjustified reason chooses not to turn right. 3. The turn is successfully made but the unit has difficulty negotiating nearby obstacles or the master loses his orientation in the process.

Remediation: 1. The master must bring his lead foot back to allow the dog room to maneuver.

2. If the dog refuses to turn right for unjustified reasons, a right-handed correction accompanied by repetition of the command "Right!" is indicated. When the dog complies, it is praised as usual.

3. Sometimes after a turn, an individual may allow his dog (and his left hand) to get too far in front of him which leads to difficulty in following the dog accurately. The solution to this problem is for the master to keep the left hand in the proper work position (see plates 4a., b. and 5a., c.) If an obstacle is present immediately after

PLATE #8.

a. CORRECT RIGHT-TURN
AND HAND SIGNAL

b. CORRECT LEFT-TURN
AND HAND SIGNAL

c. INCORRECT LEFT-TURN -
LEFT HAND NOT KEPT AT
MASTER'S SIDE AS TURN
IS MADE.

a turn, the master should side-step around the obstacle in the direction indicated by the dog. If the master turns his body to negotiate an obstacle rather than side-stepping, he may change the direction of travel of the unit which could result in disorientation with some people. The solution again, is to side-step with the dog around obstacles and to learn the proper techniques for maintaining orientation.

b. Left turns (see plate #8b.):

Correct left turn: If the lead foot is the right foot then from the proper work position the master simultaneously gives the dog the command and the hand signal for a left turn while pivoting on the ball of his left foot and turning to the left. If the lead foot is the left foot then the left foot must be brought back to a position one-half step behind the right foot. At the same time, the command and hand signal are given and the master can pivot on his left foot and turn.

Common problems: 1. The master makes the turn but the dog does not. 2. The dog clears nearby obstacles but the master does not. 3. Disorientation.

Remediation: 1. When making a left turn, it is of utmost importance that the master maintain his left hand in the proper work position. This means that if the lead foot is the left foot, then as the left foot and leg come back, the left hand (and dog) must also come back. Likewise, as the person executes the turn, his left hand does not remain stationary in space but must move with the rest of his body so that it is at all times at the side of his leg in the proper work position (see plate #8b., c.). In other words, the master's left hand

must remain at his side, in the proper work position, throughout all steps of the turning procedure.

2. Sometimes after a left turn has been made the master may be momentarily off balance and/or the dog may begin leading very quickly with the result being that the dog is positioned too far ahead or too far to the side of the master (see plate 5a., c.). This awkward position can easily result in the dog clearing nearby obstacles but the master failing to do so. The solution is for the master to maintain his balance and the proper work position throughout the turn and to accurately follow the dog's lead around obstacles.

3. Disorientation as a result of over-turning, under-turning, or changing line of desired travel may result after any turn. The answer is for the master to try to make accurate 90 degree turns and for him to side-step around obstacles rather than changing his direction of travel. If the direction of travel is momentarily changed, then awareness of this fact must be maintained in order to compensate later. Auditory clues, especially traffic locations, can be very helpful in this respect. An adequate understanding of the environment and learning and implementing proper orientation techniques are the real solution to disorientation problems whenever they occur.

c. 180 degree turns (about turns):

Correct 180 degree turn: Two proper 90 degree turns in the same direction executed in place are completed, resulting in a 180 degree turn. Both 90 degree turns are executed as individual turns with appropriate commands, hand sidnals, and praise.

Common problems: Disorientation as a result of over-turning or

under-turning.

Remediation: To maintain orientation during the about-turn process, an individual may find it helpful to execute one 90 degree turn and to locate the parallel downcurb, or another appropriate landmark, prior to executing his second 90 degree turn. This procedure allows the dog to assist in obtaining the desired direction and helps prevent compounding a kinesthetic error on the part of the master. If the 180 degree turn is being executed in an open area, then the master must rely upon his kinesthetic ability and the use of available auditory and tactual clues and landmarks.

3. Clearances:

Correct clearances (see plate #9): The dog should guide his master in such a way as to provide adequate clearance for them both around obstacles on the left, right, and straight ahead. If there is not enough room for them both to negotiate safely, i.e. a narrow passage, the dog should indicate this by stopping so that the master can identify the situation and act accordingly. When possible, a dog should place itself between an object and its master.

Common problems: a. Inadequate clearance of objects on the right (and less frequently, on the left). b. Inadequate clearance of pedestrian (on right). c. Narrow passages.

Remediation: a. If an object is lightly brushed on the right side, the dog can be corrected by the master slapping his own right leg with his right hand to amplify any collision sounds while at the same time correcting the dog verbally by saying, "No! Left!" meaning bad dog, move to the left. When the dog moves left, it is praised. Note: Before

PLATE #9.

a. CLEARING OBJECT ON RIGHT.

b. CLEARING OBJECT ON LEFT.

c. DOG STOPPING TO INDICATE
INADEQUATE PASSAGEWAY.

correcting a dog for inadequate clearance, it must be ascertained that it is indeed the dog's fault; that the master is working in the proper work position and that he is accurately following the dog's lead.

If the collision is more serious and the object is solidly contacted, a left-handed leash correction is in order. If possible, the master should then bang the object with his right hand while reprimanding the dog so that the dog makes a negative association with the object. Next, the master steps back a few feet, has the dog come to the proper work position, picks up the handle, and works past the object. Only after the object is successfully cleared is the dog praised. If the dog comes to the object and stops, it is not praised but is told, "No! Hop-up". The reason being that we do not want it to locate the object but to avoid it. Once the object is cleared, the dog is praised.

b. Pedestrian clearances are handled in much the same way as objects except that obviously the master cannot, in most instances, slap, bang, and re-work a pedestrian. However, if the problem should prove severe enough, a pedestrian clearance situation could be set up with a friend or instructor that would allow adequate correction and re-working.

c. If a dog does not indicate (by slowing or stopping for) a narrow passage situation, it is corrected (left-hand leash correction, hit the entrance and say "No!") and reworked. In this situation the dog would be praised for stopping or hesitating. The master then proceeds by saying, "Good-boy, Hop-up!", indicating that he is aware of the situation and that it is all right to proceed. It may be necessary or desirable for the master to allow the dog to temporarily get more

in front of him than is normally advisable so that they may both proceed safely through the narrow passage. This maneuver is very similar to the sighted-guide narrow passage technique. Once the narrow passage has been traversed, the correct working position is resumed and the dog is praised.

4. Street crossings:

Correct street crossings: The unit should be properly aligned and positioned for a good street crossing. Again, it is the master's responsibility to make the traffic decision. When the decision to cross is made, a "Forward" command is given and the unit proceeds to cross the street. Should the master make an error in judgement, the dog will refuse the command or begin to cross but then hesitate in order to allow unexpected traffic to pass. The unit proceeds to cross the street in as straight a line as possible, but it may be necessary for them to work around certain barriers or danger spots, e.g. manholes, potholes, etc. Upon reaching the upcurb the dog should stop or hesitate to indicate the upcurb. The master locates the upcurb with his lead foot, praises the dog for the crossing and for indicating the upcurb, and gives another "Forward" command to continue on his way.

Common problems: a. Poor initial alignment. b. Diagonal crossings. c. Veering. d. Off-set and middle of the block crossings. e. Traffic checks. f. Missed upcurb.

Remediation: a. Initial alignment is an orientation problem and consequently must be the primary responsiblity of the master. As with a cane traveler, the most reliable alignment clues are traffic sounds and line of travel continuation. In fact, when working with a

dog, line of travel continuation should be even more reliable than with a cane. For the person who has continual difficulty in obtaining good alignment an O & M specialist should concentrate on teaching that person how to monitor parallel and perpendicular traffic in order to obtain the desired alignment. This should be practiced initially without the dog until the person has confidence in his ability, using either a cane or a sighted-guide. Have the client get used to using at least one cycle to obtain his alignment and then crossing with the following cycle. Then the dog can be reintroduced and obtaining good initial alignments should be little problem. Even with the dog, at least one cycle should be used for alignment purposes prior to crossing the street. Note that while a good dog should be able to compensate somewhat for slightly incorrect alignments, very few dogs will compensate for gross alignment errors. Poor initial alignment at street crossings is often the single most serious problem encountered by dog-guide users who can not or do not monitor traffic in order to check themselves and their dog.

b. Diagonal crossings: Diagonal crossing of intersections is never to be encouraged or condoned. It usually results from one of two causes: either extremely poor orientation and alignment on the part of the master, or a very strong distraction on the part of the dog. The first cause can be remediated by teaching the master proper alignment and traffic monitoring techniques. The second cause is remediated by giving the dog a stiff correction as soon as it is noticed that it is making a diagonal crossing, turning the body in the correct direction, telling the dog "Hop-up", and then praising the dog upon reaching the

desired upcurb. The corrections used should be a right handed leash correction if the diagonal is to the left, or a slapping of the right side of the master's right leg, as with a clearance correction, if the diagonal is to the right. A left-handed leash correction is not recommended since it is bad and unsafe practice to release the harness handle when crossing a street. If requested by the student or school to assist with this type of problem, the O & M specialist should indicate to the client what is happening prior to reaching the middle of the intersection so that the master has an opportunity to correct and recover. The unit should not be allowed to complete a diagonal crossing if it is at all possible to prevent this. If the unit does somehow complete a diagonal crossing, no praise should be given the dog. Any interest shown by the dog in any distraction should be strictly corrected and the unit should work to the originally desired corner in the usual manner. This of course requires the ability, on the part of the master, to recognize the mistake and to rectify it. It may be necessary for the O & M instructor to work with the client on utilization of traffic location to facilitate such recognition. Also, the presence of an O & M instructor (or any sighted assistant) will enable the master to heel his dog back to the original starting corner and rework the crossing correctly. The dog is praised upon correctly crossing the street.

c. Veering: Veering in one direction or the other is a more common occurrence than outright diagonal crossings but if left uncorrected it can easily result in diagonal crossings. First, it must be determined what the cause of the veering is. Is it the dog's

inattention to the work? If so, this can be corrected in a manner similar to that used for diagonal crossings. More likely however a veering problem will be at least partially the fault of the master. A misconception of where straight is (incorrect initial alignment again) may result in the master crowding or steering the dog in the direction he thinks is correct rather than following his dog and allowing the dog to do its job. This problem can be alleviated by working on basic orientation techniques, as explained in Sec. 4a., with the master and by insisting that he trust his dog. Sometimes a person may be clumsy and heavy on his feet with the result being that the dog tends to veer away from him. In this case the dog should not be corrected since any correction will only enhance the dog's fear of its master. Rather, the dog should be encouraged with moderate praise in the correct direction with the master maintaining his orientation in that direction. Also, an attempt should be made to alleviate the master's clumsiness or at least make him aware of the problem. Some guide-dog schools encourage taking the first step off the down curb with the right foot, feeling that by stepping initially with the foot away from the dog, there is less likelihood of intimidating the dog into veering away from the master. Another cause of veering may be that when working around some problem in the street, the master may change his direction of travel rather than side-stepping with the dog. Likewise, he and the dog may neglect to recover the proper amount after working around something. These, of course, are orientation problems and should be handled accordingly. Such techniques as monitoring parallel traffic while crossing and straight line projection are especially useful and

should be emphasized by the instructor. If the dog does not recover, a mild correction may be given but it must be followed with much praise as the dog recovers. Again, it is most important that the master firmly maintain the proper direction (line) of travel.

d. Off-set intersections and middle of the block crossings: Should an O & M instructor be requested to assist a unit that continually has difficulty with an off-set intersection, it is recommended that the O & M instructor take the unit sighted-guide, dog at heel, across the street and back several times. The dog is praised generously by the master at each arrival. Next, the unit should attempt to work the crossing by itself. If the dog again misses the crossing (and it is not due to disorientation on the master's part) the dog should be corrected as in veering and, of course, praised upon reaching the desired corner. Then the O & M instructor should take the unit (sighted-guide, dog at heel) back across the street to allow re-working. The dog may show some signs of confusion and may require some encouragement on reworking. Praise should be abundant upon a correct crossing.

Guide-dog users are not encouraged to make middle-of-the-block crossings of streets (that is, from a middle of a block to a corner, even when there may be a crosswalk). This is because the dog should go to the side curb of a parallel street only under special circumstances. A guide-dog is expected to work from corner to corner in as straight a line as possible. Abberations from this pattern will be annoying and confusing, particularly for persons with marginal orientation. The recommended procedure is to have the unit work to the nearest corner, turn and cross there, and then work back on the opposite side

of the street. Crossing from a corner to the middle of a block is acceptable. If it is absolutely necessary, when working a particular route, to cross from the middle of a block, then a definite landmark should be established and the crossing should be made consistently from that point. (See Sec. A.4. in Part Four).

e. Traffic checks: After a dog gives a traffic check (stopping for unexpected or misjudged traffic), it should be praised and told "Hop-up" or "Forward" to continue. If a person's traffic judgement is so bad as to necessitate a series of, or frequent, traffic checks, a dog may become reluctant or hesitant about making street crossings. To remediate this situation, the O & M instructor must first assist the master in learning to make good traffic judgements. This should first be taught and practiced thoroughly without the dog. Next, the dog should be reintroduced and the unit should practice street crossings in a quiet area. The dog should be given encouragement when crossing and much praise upon reaching the upcurb. After consistent success in a quiet area, the unit can move to a busier area. The O & M instructor can serve to confirm traffic judgements before crossings are attempted, and should continue to assist in helping the traveler learn to make reliable traffic judgements. Again, the dog may be encouraged when crossing and should receive much praise at the upcurb. Finally, the unit should be able to resume its normal routine, hopefully with better traffic decisions and fewer traffic checks than before.

f. Missed upcurbs: Occasionally, a dog will miss an upcurb through inattention or distraction. The correction procedure is basically the same as for a missed downcurb except that the person

would not walk back several steps in the street and rework the situation. This is done for safety reasons and while it may sacrifice some continuity from the dog's point of view, it is usually found to be sufficiently effective so long as the master corrects for the mistake, has the dog sit just before the upcurb, praises sufficiently at the upcurb, and does not allow the dog to proceed until he has given a "Forward" command. If it is deemed necessary to rework missed upcurbs, it must be done with someone else observing and, if necessary, directing traffic.

We might mention here that some capable people encourage their dogs to merely hesitate to indicate an upcurb and then proceed to negotiate the step by feeling the movement of the harness handle. This is similar to the way such a person might work with a sighted-guide. Such a procedure is fine for those who are capable of using it. However, difficulties may arise with unexpected upsteps or increasingly less indication given by the dog. Anytime there are difficulties with upcurbs or upsteps it should be insisted that the dog come to a complete stop and not proceed until commanded to do so. Anything less would warrant a correction.

Also, we should mention blended curbs since these are becoming more and more common. Theoretically, the dog should stop for these just as it stops for regular up or downcurbs. Often, however, the dog will merely hesitate or not stop at all for this type of situation. The master should then remediate the same way he would for missed regular up or down curbs. The master may be able to tell where the street begins or ends by gradient and/or texture changes. If not, an

O & M instructor, or other sighted assistant, should indicate verbally to the master the exact moment the sidewalk blends into the street, (or vice versa) so that the master can correct at the proper moment. One might say something to the effect "You are approaching the street. -Ready- Now!". Usually a few repetitions of such situations are all that are required for the dog to learn to stop whether the curbs are regular or blended.

5. Barriers and overhangs:

Correct procedure: The proper procedure for handling barrier or overhang situations will depend upon whether all or just part of the way is blocked. If only part of the way is blocked, the dog can handle the situation as a clearance problem and go around the barrier or overhang either on the clear part of the sidewalk or on an open lawn or shoreline. The dog may come up to the barrier or overhang and stop and wait for identification by the master, which the master would do by extending his right arm straight ahead and checking an arc from above his head down to his knees. This is quite acceptable since it gives the master an opportunity to identify the situation tactually and be aware of what is taking place when the dog takes him temporarily off the sidewalk.

If the entire path is blocked, the dog must come up to the obstacle and stop. The master then identifies the reason for stopping, praises the dog for stopping, and then directs the dog to work around the barrier by giving a directional command to the side curb. The dog then works to the side curb and stops. The master praises for the stop and then commands "Forward" immediately followed by a series of suggested directional

commands that will bring the dog back to the curb on the same side of the street. While in the street, it is the dog's responsibility to work around any obstacles it may encounter, e.g. parked cars, construction work, etc. The dog should choose the first opening available to return to the side curb. The dog stops or hesitates to indicate the side curb and receives praise. The master then commands "Forward" and the unit steps up on the shoreline or sidewalk. Usually the dog will continue in the original direction of travel. If not, the master should give a directional command to get the dog going in the desired direction. Good praise upon completion of the entire problem is very important.

Common problems: a. Dog does not stop at barrier or overhang. b. Dog goes immediately to the side curb causing orientation problems. c. Dog does not stop for side curb. d. Dog stops too far from barrier or overhang.

Remediation: a. The dog that does not stop at a barrier should be given a left-handed leash correction the moment contact with that barrier is made. It is then brought back in front of the barrier and placed at sit. The barrier is identified by the master and the dog is praised for sitting in front of it. The master then steps back a few feet, dog at heel, and reworks the situation. The dog is praised upon stopping for the barrier. Please note that this is the procedure for a barrier that is totally blocking the way. For partial obstruction the situation would probably be handled more like a regular obstacle clearance problem (see Sec. D.3), particularly with overhangs, since we don't want the dog to get into the habit of coming to these types of

objects when they can be avoided.

b. Sometimes, after several experiences with barriers, a dog may tend to go immediately to the sidecurb without first going up to the barrier. This presents problems because the master is very apt to be unaware of the situation and can easily become confused. Individuals with poor orientation may think they are at a corner downcurb heading in one direction when in fact they are at the sidecurb in the middle of the block and facing a different direction. This problem can be avoided if the master pays attention to traffic location and patterns, if any, and by the master refusing to change direction of travel until he so desires. An O & M instructor asked to assist with this type of problem can be most helpful by working with the master, without the dog, on the use of traffic location and patterns. Once the master is able to recognize what is taking place from an orientation standpoint the dog can be reintroduced and the master should be able to handle the situation. The person may side-step with the dog but he should not turn his body until he decides to. If the dog stops short of the barrier a simple "Hop-up" will usually be sufficient to encourage the dog up to the barrier. Once at the barrier, the dog should be given ample praise while the barrier is being physically identified.

c. If the dog misses either down or up curbs when working around a barrier, it should be corrected as it would for these mistakes when crossing a street. The exception might be if a dog has already been corrected for another mistake associated with the barrier, in which case it is usually advisable to work on only one problem at a time, leaving the second problem for a later time. This decision is often based upon the individual personalities of the dog and master.

d. A dog that stops short of a barrier can usually be encouraged up to it, as mentioned above, with the "Hop-up" command and perhaps some intermittent light praise. Frequently, stopping short is the result of over-correction without adequate appropriate praise. This being so, it is imperative that the master search thoroughly for the up-coming barrier so that he does not "command" his dog to go through it and then correct the dog for his own mistake. Once the dog stops close enough for the master to locate the barrier, he should be praised generously.

6. Steps and staircases:

Correct procedure: The unit comes to the first step and stops. The master locates the first step with his lead foot and the handrail with his right hand and praises the dog. When he is ready to begin, the master gives a "Forward" command and negotiates the steps. The hand rail may be used if needed. Body weight should be shifted slightly to the rear going down and forward going up.

Common problems: a. Dog does not stop for first step. b. Dog leaps from next to last downstep. c. Handrail needed but located only on the wrong side of staircase.

Remediation: a. Dogs that don't stop for the first step should be corrected exactly as they are corrected for missing curbs: Left handed correction, sit at first step, which is identified and receive praise, step back several paces - dog at heel, rework the situation. Dogs are usually quite good about stopping for down-steps and they may even stop a bit far from the top step. If this happens, a simple "Hop-up" and a one-step-at-a-time probe with the lead foot will usually

locate the top step. The master must take care not to command the dog "Forward" prior to locating the first step. If the dog misses the first up-step, it may be due to the master not requiring a complete stop at up-curbs or familiar steps. If the master expects the dog to stop at some up-steps or up-curbs he should require the dog to stop at all steps and curbs for the sake of consistency.

b. A dog that leaps from the second or third step from the bottom should be given a left-handed leash correction. This will both correct the dog and help the master maintain his balance. If the person is capable enough, he should have his dog come back to the work position and rework the problem. If not, the master should step down to the bottom and then resume working.

c. Sometimes a situation may arise in which a person feels the need to use a handrail but has one available only on his left side. In this situation the person should heel the dog on his right side, using his left hand to grip the handrail. There should be no attempt made to work a dog on the opposite side from that for which it has been trained. While the person does sacrifice his coverage in this situation it is much more important that he maintain his balance on the steps.

7. Undesirable speed or pull:

Correct: Dog and master well matched and adjusted to each other's pace and pull.

Common problems: a. Dog too fast, pull too hard. b. Dog too slow, pull too light. c. Incorrect work speed for a given situation.

Remediation: a. When the dog travels too fast, the master should first try quickly pushing the harness handle forward and down while

he says in a slow, calm voice, "Steady" or "Easy". By pushing the harness breastpiece forward the dog is momentarily placed off balance and should slow down. Another method that the master might use would be to give the dog a right handed leash correction, while working and saying "Steady", only bringing his right hand up to his chest rather than to the right side. In extreme situations, the master can stop and give a left handed correction accompanied by "Steady". After several stops and corrections the dog should be a little less eager to continue. No voice tone should be used that would excite the dog. Dogs that pull too hard would be handled similarly but it should be understood that usually the more a person hangs back, the more a dog will pull forward. Therefore, the person should try to go with his dog, as much as possible, within safe and reasonable limits. This is particularly true during a unit's initial adjustment period after leaving the school. Chronic excessive pull should be referred to the guide-dog school for their assessment and remediation.

b. For the dog that walks too slow, the master should command "Hop-up" in a quick, exciting manner. At the same time, the master increases his pace while being careful not to get ahead of his dog (see plate #5b.). The dog should respond by increasing its pace and the master should immediately praise the dog in an enthusiastic and exciting manner, "Atta boy! -Good boy, etc."

For the dog that does not pull hard enough, the person needs to show some patience and be absolutely sure that he does not get ahead of his dog. Lack of pull is often the result of the master taking the initiative away from the dog or not allowing the dog to exercise its

responsibilities. With the master hanging back, but not stopping, the dog is almost forced to pull and usually the dog will respond in this manner. Concurrently with hanging back, the master can say, "Hop-up" and give encouraging praise whenever the pull increases.

Again, for chronic cases of too little pace or pull the unit should be referred to the proper guide-dog school for their evaluation and remediation. It could be that there is a temperament or physical problem that the school is best able to determine and correct. If it is obvious that a dog is not in good health, it should be referred to a veterinarian before any work, let alone remediation, is attempted.

c. Examples of incorrect work speed for a given situation might be moving too fast inside a building or store, or moving too slow when crossing a street. These types of situations would be handled as the general problems described above, giving consideration to necessary safety requirements.

8. Miscellaneous problems:

a. Getting ahead of the dog (see plate #5b.): Getting ahead of the dog may result from a dog walking slower than the master likes or from the master being impatient and not "reading" his dog's movements properly. This situation must be avoided at all times for two reasons: First, because the person loses all protection afforded by the dog, and second, because the master is taking the initiative away from the dog and this can only compound problems. The master should be advised to adjust his pace in order to remain in the proper work position at all times, to increase the dog's pace if necessary, and to pay careful attention to the indications and information the dog provides by

changing its pace according to the situation and the environment.

b. Not following: "Following the dog" means working with the dog in the proper work position and correctly interpreting and adjusting to the dog's movements (see plates 4a., b. and 9). It does not mean getting directly behind the dog. Sometimes an individual may have difficulty following his dog for any of a number of reasons. In these instances, the dog will move one way but the master will not. The dog may try to give a clearance or work a preferred area but the master may not interpret the dog's movements until it is too late. The problems that arise from this type of situation soon become obvious and are similar to those of an individual that does not follow a sighted-guide accurately. An O & M instructor can attempt to remediate this type of situation by utilizing the harness and playing the role of the dog (see plate #10). The instructor would simulate various work situations and give the person an opportunity to practice without adversely affecting the dog, although the dog should still be worked daily on simple routes. When the dog is again being used, the O & M instructor can provide verbal information and reinforcement to assist the person in following the dog's movements. If the problem persists, the guide-dog school should be contacted to help evaluate and remediate the situation.

c. Cueing: "Cueing" a dog refers to the process of giving subtle physical direction and assistance to the dog at times when no direction or only verbal direction should be required. Examples of cueing might include such things as: pushing the harness handle forward when commanding the dog "Forward" or "Hop-up"; physically holding the dog back in

anticipation of an approaching curb; and subtle steering of the dog around obstacles perceived visually or auditorally.

Many people develop subtle cues and incorporate them into their work pattern. Often they are totally unaware of the fact that they are cueing at all. Much of the time minor cueing presents little or no problem and may be ignored. Problems usually arise when cueing is employed to such an extent that the initiative is taken away from the dog and the dog becomes dependent upon cueing in situations where it is its responsibility to make decisions.

If there is a cueing problem, the first step in remediation is to make the person aware of the situations and ways in which he is cueing his dog. Then the master must make a concentrated effort to use only proper commands and hand signals and proper correction and praise must be employed at the appropriate times. It may be beneficial to exaggerate the praise in some instances. If work problems due to cueing (but not necessarily cueing itself) continue, the guide-dog school should be consulted.

d. Taking the initiative away from the dog: This refers to the process in which the master, or some other person, physically makes decisions, correct or incorrect, that are in fact the dog's responsibility to make. Examples might be the person that steps off or onto a curb before his dog does; the individual that attempts to "steer" his dog around an obstacle one way when the dog is trying to clear in the other direction; the person that insists upon walking a straight line down a sidewalk while the dog is attempting to work a preferred area of the sidewalk; the situation in which an individual utilizes a sighted-guide

but continues to hold onto the harness handle - the sighted-guide will guide one way while the dog attempts to guide another; the person that ducks around perceived obstacles rather than allowing the dog to make the mistake and then correcting for it; and others.

Taking the initiative away from the dog will result in a marked deterioration in the dog's work pattern. Eventually, the dog will lose most, if not all, responsibility. This is often a serious problem for low vision users or users with fluctuating vision. When these individuals are functioning visually, they may frequently tend to make decisions or dodge objects visually rather than trust the dog with that responsibility. Working with occluders is one possibility but usually we prefer that a person use any vision that he can. The trick here is for the low vision person to use his vision but to use it in a way that does not interfere with the dog. We do not mean to suggest that a person should crash into objects he can otherwise avoid, but neither should the person duck or steer the dog around such problems. If a person perceives an obstacle that the dog may miss, he should employ one of the protective techniques, such as the upperhand and forearm technique, make contact with the object, and correct the dog and rework the situation. Likewise, a person should step off a curb missed by the dog and correct and rework the situation rather than physically stop the dog from running a curb.

This problem is more difficult for individuals who have just enough vision to perceive objects just prior to physical contact. Ducking and dodging is a natural reflex in such situations and is to be expected. However, if the dog is ever to work properly, it must be

allowed to make mistakes which can then be corrected. In a situation such as this, an instructor can assist by observing and providing the master with verbal information about the environment and how the dog is working. The instructor should describe upcoming situations, how the master is following, how it appears that the dog will work the situation, and if there is about to be contact (or a missed curb, etc.). The instructor should tell the master to go to a protective technique and to "Stop!" or "Halt" just prior to contact. At this point the master can contact the object with his hand, correct the dog, and rework the situation. By this method, the dog's work should improve and the master's confidence in his dog should increase.

Taking the initiative away from the dog is not limited to low vision users. It may occur with people with very good auditory perception or with anyone who, for whatever reason, does not trust his dog. The result, however, is invariably the same.

e. Uncommon problems that occasionally arise: With any of the problems or situations in the preceding section we advised contacting the appropriate guide-dog school as a professional courtesy and whenever a problem persists or whenever there is any question as to what is occurring or the proper way to handle the situation. With the problems to be covered in this section it is imperative that the master or the O & M specialist contact the guide-dog school as soon as it is determined that there is a definite problem.

1. Mental unsoundness: Mental unsoundness in a dog can be defined as an unjustified fear of and/or an over-reaction to a given situation. The most common areas in which mental unsoundness arises are in situations

dealing with traffic, loud or unexpected noise, crowds, and closed in areas. Miscellaneous other unsoundnesses may occur also, including an over-all breakdown resulting from the pressure of the work. Mental unsoundness may be due to a latent temperament flaw that went undetected during the training process or due to experiences encountered once out in the field (and probably handled incorrectly). Remember, these are relatively infrequent occurrences. In any event, the guide-dog school should be notified immediately, as an unsound dog is not only difficult to work, but may be unsafe as well.

2. Aggressiveness and/or over-protectiveness: Aggressiveness towards other dogs can usually be remediated by stiff, consistent corrections. Aggressiveness and/or over-protectiveness with regards to humans should be neither encouraged nor tolerated. These dogs have been bred, raised, and trained to be guide-dogs, not guard dogs. Aggressive dogs pose a nuisance and a danger to the people that must live and work around the dog and a social, working, and legal liability to the master. The master is in the best position to judge what level of protectiveness, if any, is acceptable. Any problems in this area should be referred immediately to the guide-dog school.

3. Unusual health problems (physical unsoundness): As mentioned before, any unusual or chronic health problems should be brought to the attention of the appropriate guide-dog school as well as being referred to a competent veterinarian.

4. Boarding problems: Occasionally, a situation might arise in which a guide-dog user will be unable to use or care for his dog for an extended period of time and during which time he is unable to locate

suitable boarding facilities for his dog. In such circumstances, the appropriate school should be contacted and advised of the situation as it may be in the best position to offer the necessary assistance.

PART THREE

PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS: EVALUATION AND PREPARATION BY ORIENTATION AND MOBILITY SPECIALISTS

A. Physical Requirements

1. Age:

Most guide-dog schools set a minimum age requirement of 16 - 18 years below which they will not accept a student. The general feeling is that children under this age may lack the responsibility needed to care for a dog; that they have many other things that they must attend to, e.g. basic O & M skills, etc.; and that interference from peers may result in many problems for both dog and master.

Upper age limits vary from school to school. Some schools set fairly rigid upper age limits to which they closely adhere for first-time students. Other schools set virtually no upper age limit and predicate acceptance upon suitable overall health and attitude. There appears to be a growing trend in guide-dog schools towards the latter acceptance standard, which is encouraging since more than 50% of the blindness in this country occurs in people over 50 years of age. Individual schools should be contacted to ascertain what their particular standards are.

2. General health and fitness:

Quite naturally, the better a person's overall health and fitness is, the easier it is for that person to be matched with a suitable dog and to undergo the somewhat rigorous training program. However, the traditional view that a person must be in near perfect condition in order to work successfully with a guide-dog has changed dramatically

during the past decade.

Originally, students were required to be able to walk at a pace of 3 - 4 m.p.h., in order to keep up with a type of dog that worked best at that speed. Improved breeding programs, along with the use of several different breeds of dog, have led to the use of a wide variety of dogs that are suitable for the work but yet work at a wide variety of paces. Likewise, dogs are available that differ widely in their sensitivity to types of handling or other problems. The prevailing trend today is to attempt to match a dog to a person's normal, or slightly faster than normal, pace, be that 4 m.p.h. or 1 m.p.h. The student should be able to walk at a speed of at least 1 m.p.h., non stop for at least one mile.

Most, if not all, schools will require that the student undergo a physical examination by his personal physician and that the doctor agree to the student's participation in the training program. Additionally, the school may require that students with any serious additional health problems or conditions submit to a physical examination by the school's consulting physician and that he also agree to the student's participation in the program.

3. Residual vision:

Guide-dog schools vary with regards to the amount of residual vision they deem acceptable in their students. Some schools will accept anyone that is legally blind. Other schools prefer that their students have little or no useful vision. The feeling of these schools is that too much vision will either negate the need for a guide-dog or will interfere with the proper use of a guide-dog, which will lead to a

breakdown in the dog's work pattern. This may or may not be the case, depending upon the individual student and how well he is trained to work with his dog.

With regards to persons with residual vision then, it may be said that anyone who is legally blind and who feels that he will definitely benefit from using a guide-dog will usually be able to locate a school that will be willing to service him. However, this may not be the school of his first choice.

4. Additional physical handicaps:

Blindness is often accompanied by additional physical handicaps and the question arises as to whether or not persons affected by such handicaps can successfully work with guide-dogs. The answer will depend upon the type and severity of the additional handicap, the motivation and overall competence of the individual, and perhaps upon the amount of useful residual vision the applicant has.

Generally, additional physical handicaps fall into the following categories: a) auditory; b) orthopedic; and c) debilitating disease entities.

a. Auditory handicaps: Persons with a hearing loss can be serviced providing that they have enough hearing remaining or enough of a combination of vision and hearing remaining so that they can function safely and so that they can communicate with their instructor. Also, it is necessary that they have at least fair balance. While the importance of being able to make accurate traffic judgements and adequate traffic alignments cannot be overemphasized, a person having minor difficulties with these tasks due to an auditory loss may benefit

tremendously from use of a dog-guide. There have been attempts to service a few totally blind, totally deaf students in which communication has taken place by means of a tella-touch and by means of finger spelling. These attempts have met with limited success but the totally deaf-blind guide-dog user is quite restricted as to what he can do with his dog and must utilize the public for much assistance.

b. Orthopedic handicaps: People with a variety of orthopedic handicaps have been successfully trained to work with guide-dogs. The minimum requirements would include: 1) enough mobility to be able to walk along with a dog and to complete minimum routes in a reasonable time. 2) at least one adequate hand and arm in order to hold on to the handle and to correct the dog. 3) enough strength and balance to be able to safely negotiate curbs and steps. Braces, orthopedic canes, and prosthetic limbs or devices do not by themselves preclude the use of a guide-dog.

c. Debilitating disease entities: Additional debilitating diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, and hypertension do not in and of themselves preclude the use of guide-dogs. In these cases the criterion would be whether or not the individual has the physical stamina required to undergo the training and to care for and use a guide-dog.

In the case of such diseases or problems such as epilepsy or problems of in-co-ordination, the determining factors would be: 1) the severity of the problem, 2) how the problem manifests itself, and 3) how the manifestations of the problem will affect the dog. Individual schools should be contacted for specific details about their

policies regarding such clients.

Most schools have a nurse and/or consulting doctor available. In any event, someone will be available to assist with the administration of medications. Again, the individual schools should be contacted for specific details regarding their policy in this matter.

It should be remembered that while additional physical handicaps may not preclude an individual obtaining and using a guide-dog, it will be more difficult to service such an individual and he may be required to wait until the proper dog is available. It is recommended that a personal evaluation by a guide-dog school representative be made if there is any question as to the feasibility of servicing an individual with a guide-dog.

5. Assessing pace and pull requirements and correction ability:

"Pace" refers to the walking speed at which a person can comfortably and normally work with a guide-dog.

"Pull" refers to the amount of force that a dog must exert in order to adequately lead and guide a given person.

"Correction ability" refers to the physical strength and the tone of voice that a person is able to use when giving a dog a correction.

Pace can be estimated by walking with an individual sighted-guide. If the individual is relaxed and comfortable at a brisk speed he would be said to have a "fast" pace. If, on the otherhand, a person is only comfortable at a slow speed he would be said to have a "slow" pace. A "moderate" pace would fall in between the two extremes. In terms of actual speed, slow would probably be equal to 1 m.p.h. or less. Moderate would be about 2 m.p.h., and fast would be equal to 3 m.p.h.

or greater. Pace may also be described as "slow to moderate" or "moderate to fast" for those who fluctuate or do not fall into one specific category.

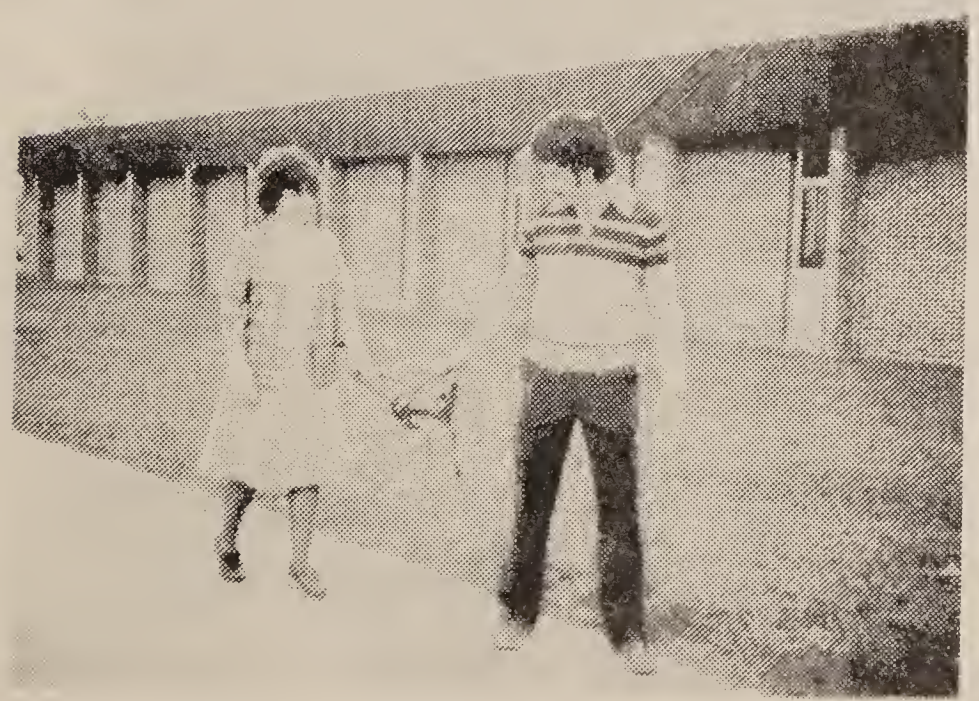
Pull can also be estimated by leading an individual sighted-guide. If the individual is relaxed, has good balance, and follows easily and accurately, he is said to need a "light" pull. If the person lacks confidence, is reluctant to follow, has difficulty interpreting movements and requires more than usual force in order to be adequately guided, then he is said to require a "heavy" or "strong" pull. Again, "moderate" would fall in between and "light to moderate" or "moderate to strong" might in fact be the most accurate descriptions.

When measuring both pace and pull, a good idea might be to have the client grip a rigid object, which the guide is also holding, rather than grip the guide's arm, since in reality he will be guided by the rigid harness handle and some differences in confidence or ability to follow might appear. An actual harness handle is the ideal instrument for this but many things may be used to approximate this in lieu of an actual handle. (See plate #10).

When assessing pace and pull, it is also a good opportunity to observe an individual's ability to maintain his orientation when following a guide, and this observation should be duly noted. Also, because a person may not be used to following a harness handle or similar type object, the utmost care must be exercised by the instructor assessing an individual in this manner. Smooth, wide, level sidewalks should be used. Sidewalks with lateral drop-offs or excessive cracks should be avoided and the instructor must watch where the client is

PLATE #10.

SIGHTED-GUIDE USING HARNESS
AND HANDLE FOR EVALUATION OR TRAINING



walking at all times.

Correction ability can be measured by holding, or attaching to an immovable object, a leash or rope and giving the other end to the prospective student. The student is then instructed to give the leash a sharp jerk straight back with the left hand and then to the right and back with the right hand. At the same time, he is told to say "No" or "Phooey" with a harsh tone of voice. The strength of the physical correction and the adequacy of the voice tone are then noted. Also at this time, the person's voice quality should be tested for the capacity to give commands and praise.

B. Mental Requirements

1. Intelligence:

So long as an individual possesses near average or better intelligence he should be intellectually capable of working with and caring for a guide-dog. Above average I.Q. does not appear to enhance chances for success and an I.Q. of 80 - 100 is not indicative of increased chances of failure. Perhaps more important than actual I.Q. intelligence is that type of intelligence commonly known as common sense. An individual who possesses good common sense will definitely have an advantage over one who lacks it. Of course, measuring these things may be very subjective.

A person's understanding of his environment and orientation abilities must also be taken into consideration when evaluating a prospective dog-guide user. The greater a person's understanding of his environment and the better a person's ability to maintain orientation in that environment, the greater will be his chances of succeeding with

a dog-guide. To a large extent, these abilities are learned skills and knowledge and a prospective dog-guide user should receive thorough training in these areas prior to attempting work with a dog-guide. These areas are much more readily taught and learned without the presence of a dog and no person lacking in these areas should be encouraged to obtain a dog under the premise that he can improve his orientation skills or his knowledge of the environment afterwards.

2. Emotional makeup:

The emotional makeup of an individual is a very important factor in determining a person's suitability to have and to work with a guide-dog. It is also important in determining what type of a dog that individual will require. Generally speaking, a person must be emotionally stable, within loosely defined "normal" limits. He must be able to control himself, his temper, and his feelings before he will be able to control a dog. He must not harp on the negative to excess, for when his dog makes a mistake he must be able to correct his dog for that mistake but he cannot dwell on that mistake for longer than it takes to correct it. Nervousness, irritability, fear, anger and other emotional qualities are present at different times and in different amounts in everybody, but they must not be excessive in an individual desiring to work with a guide-dog. Any unusual emotional characteristics of an individual should be noted and reported to the prospecive guide-dog school.

It is well known that the onset of blindness is often accompanied by emotional problems or disturbances. It has in the past been said that a person must accept his blindness or be "adjusted" to his blindness before he can be given a guide-dog (or other rehabilitation services).

The fact of the matter is that how well we, as rehabilitation workers, assist an individual to learn to handle the problems associated with blindness will, to a large extent, determine that individual's attitude towards his blindness. In general, however, it seems safe to say that an individual must accept the fact of his blindness and its (probable) permanence before he will be ready to receive a dog. As far as other associated emotional problems, if any, they should be thoroughly discussed with the prospective guide-dog school. It is usually much better for a person to receive a dog-guide towards the latter stages of the rehabilitation process rather than at the beginning of that process.

3. Attitude (Motivation):

The attitude of a prospective guide-dog user should be one that is enthusiastic about both independent mobility and having a dog. His motivation for obtaining and using a dog must be high and it must be primarily self-determined after having been presented an accurate and objective picture of all that guide-dog use entails. Above all, he must realize that having a guide-dog involves a symbiotic (or mutually dependent) relationship in which he must be willing to accept responsibility for his part. His dog will have to be cared for daily, whether it is used or not, and if the dog is expected to maintain a good work pattern it will have to be worked frequently; at least several times each week and preferably at least once each day.

Other miscellaneous thing that should be considered are: how a dog will fit into an individual's life style; the feelings of the person's family and colleagues towards dogs; the ability of an individual to

financially support a dog - here the prospective student should figure on being able to budget about $520/year or $10/week towards the upkeep of his dog. This would include money for food (about $6 for 25 lbs. - 1979 prices), for annual shots and medications, and for unexpected veterinary or short term boarding expenses.

C. Preparation

The O & M specialist can be very helpful in assisting a prospective student in becoming properly prepared to undergo a guide-dog training program. The amount of preparation required will vary from person to person, but proper preparation will enhance any individual's chances of success.

1. Orientation and Mobility:

General orientation and mobility techniques are very beneficial to guide-dog users. While the ability to travel independently using a long cane is not a prerequisite for obtaining a guide-dog, it is certainly recommended as there are bound to be times when the guide-dog user will not wish to or will not be able to use his dog.

Orientation techniques and ability are extremely important in conjunction with guide-dog use and the importance of these techniques and abilities cannot be overemphasized. As mentioned before, preparation in this area should take place prior to receiving the dog-guide. Particular attention should be paid to the following areas:

a. Use of compass directions, including directional sides and directional corners.

b. Street crossing traffic judgements, including turning cars and cars that turn right on red lights.

c. Use of parallel and perpendicular traffic and traffic patterns to obtain and maintain alignments and orientation. The technique of tracking one car through the intersection for as long as it can be heard (when the car is going in the same direction as the traveler) is very useful.

d. All aspects of audition. In particular, listening for doorways, ends of building lines, openings in building lines, traffic proximity, etc.

e. Use and establishment of landmarks and clues. In particular, auditory, gradient, and textural clues and landmarks.

f. Numbering systems.

We certainly do not intend to tell O & M specialists how to teach any of the above areas. We would suggest however, that when teaching orientation as preparation for work with a guide-dog, that it be done with a sighted-guide as well as with a long cane since a sighted-guide more closely approximates travel with a dog. Remember at all times that it should be the student and not the guide who is responsible for making decisions and for maintaining orientation.

2. Exercise:

Exercise is a particularly important aspect of the preparation for a guide-dog training program. This is especially true for older persons, for persons with additional handicaps or associated diseases, and for anyone who is not used to a good amount of regular daily activity.

The purpose of preparatory exercise is three-fold:

a. Increase endurance: The prospective student should be able to walk, at his own pace, at least one mile at a time without undue

fatigue. He should be able to do this twice a day for a total of two miles.

b. Prevent or decrease foot and leg problems: Blisters and shin splints are very common to those who undertake a lot of walking without adequate preparation. Both are very uncomfortable and blisters present a particular danger to diabetics. Additionally, good muscle tone will tend to reduce sprains and muscle related problems.

c. Increase walking speed: Normally an individual will find that he tends to walk somewhat faster with a dog than he does without one.

The recommended way of assisting an individual obtain proper exercise is to assist him, sighted-guide, with daily walks. Start with short routes and build upon them daily as the individual is able. Preparatory stretching exercises or calesthenics are good if the individual is capable of partaking of such exercises. A physician should be consulted before beginning any preparatory exercise program if there is any question whatsoever about a person's ability to participate in such a program.

3. Proper shoes and clothing:

Proper shoes and clothing suited for the appropriate seasonal weather conditions are absolutely essential. Guide-dog training and work takes place in all weather conditions and if a student does not have proper clothes and footwear he will not have much patience in foul weather situations and he may also endanger his health. Shoes should be sturdy, fit well, and be comfortable to walk in (that is, well broken-in). Some sort of waterproof boot or over-shoe is recommended. Good gripping soles are needed for winter conditions. Sneakers, or

sandals, are not recommended except for casual wear inside the school, and here the student may well appreciate them. High heels should be avoided. Clothing should be appropriate for the climatic conditions and at least one change of clothing must be brought. Laundry facilities will be available. Hats and foul weather gear are highly recommended. Some schools have certain specific dress code regulations and these must be followed at these particular schools.

4. Residual vision:

In preparing potential students with residual vision, special attention should be given to making certain that the student follows his guide and does not steer his guide or dodge obstacles. If obstacles are detected that will not be cleared, then the student should stop or release the guide just prior to physically contacting the obstacle. This will simulate the way a person with residual vision would have to handle the situation were he working with a dog that was not working correctly. The aspects of orientation training discussed in Section C.1 should also receive strong concentration when preparing a prospective dog-guide user who has residual vision.

PART FOUR

ORIENTATIONS AND FAMILIARIZATIONS WITH GUIDE-DOG USERS ALSO, TEACHING GUIDE-DOG USERS THE USE OF ELECTRONIC MOBILITY AIDS.

A. Orientations and Familiarizations

At times guide-dog users, like anyone else, will require assistance in becoming oriented to, or familiarized with, particular areas. A new guide-dog user might need such assistance when he returns home from the guide-dog school if he did not travel independently prior to receiving his dog. New and experienced guide-dog users might also find such assistance helpful when they begin working in new environments, perhaps as a result of a change in residence, job, or school situation. Additionally, many problems that arise with dog-guide users, that appear at first glance to be work problems, are in fact orientation problems or at least rooted in orientation problems. Furthermore, experience has shown that almost all travelers, regardless of level of proficiency, function better when they are well oriented and are traveling in a familiar environment. It stands to reason then that orientation and familiarization must be the first, and often the most important, step in the remediation of difficulties encountered by dog-guide users. Local O & M specialists are well suited to render such service to guide-dog users but they may be unsure as to how to deal with a dog in such situations. In this section we will outline the various ways of orienting and familiarizing guide-dog users (and their dogs) to new areas and common situations.

1. Without the dog:

One way of orienting a guide-dog user to an area is to do it

without the dog. The dog may be left at home, with another person, or secured in a suitable place. In this case, the orientation would take place basically as it would with any other client. The client could use either a long cane or a sighted-guide and the O & M specialist would describe the area and point out significant aspects of the environment as it is traversed. Whenever possible, it is preferable to conduct initial orientations and familiarizations while having the traveler use accepted long cane technique. This is because use of the long cane places the burden of concentration, exploration, and decision making upon the traveler rather than upon the guide or instructor. Particular attention should be given to traffic flow amounts and patterns, auditory clues and landmarks, gradient and elevation changes, and spatial relationships. The use of some types of objects as clues or landmarks may be somewhat limited to the dog-guide user unless they can be perceived auditorally or unless the dog is taught to go to these objects specifically (see section 4. below). This is so because normally a guide-dog and master try to avoid objects in the environment. Also, certain tactual clues and landmarks, such as shorelines, sidewalk cracks, and surface texture differences, may be less noticeable or useable to the guide-dog user than to the long cane user.

2. <u>With the dog at heel</u>:

Another method of orienting a guide-dog user to an area is to have the individual heel his dog while he travels sighted-guide with the O & M instructor. Since the dog should be heeled on the left side, the guide-dog user should grip the sighted-guide's left arm with his

right hand. Attention would be given to the same types of things as in section 1. above, only this time the dog as well as the master is given an opportunity to become somewhat accustomed to, if not actually familiar with, the area. The master should require the dog to sit at all up-steps, down-steps, over-hangs, doors, and narrow passages. When the dog sits, the master should identify the situation by tapping it with hand or foot and he should praise his dog. This procedure will reinforce the appropriate action on the part of the dog when it is working. It must be remembered that at any time that the dog is present it is to be handled exclusively by its master.

3. With the dog working:

Many guide-dog users prefer to become familiarized to an area while they are actually working with their dogs. This gives both dog and master a chance right off to see what types of situations will be encountered and how they can best be handled. When working with a guide-dog user who chooses to work his dog, the O & M specialist should position himself several feet behind and slightly to the right of the unit. From this position the O & M instructor will not interfere with the working dog, yet he will be able to see any potentially dangerous situations and he will be close enough to give verbal information, descriptions, and instructions to the client.

Should the client decide to use the O & M specialist (or anyone else) as a guide, the dog must be immediately put at heel. If this is not done, confusion to the dog would result since it might try to guide one way while the sighted-guide goes another. Also, should the O & M specialist give prolonged instructions or descriptions, while not moving,

the person should release the handle and the dog should be placed at sit. If this is taking place at a street corner or downcurb, the guide-dog user should back away from the downcurb since his dog will no longer afford him protection.

It should be noted that the three methods of orienting a guide-dog user to an area are not necessarily mutually exclusive. A person might be familiarized to an area without his dog on the first day (or first time), heeling his dog on the next day (or time), and working his dog on the third. Or a person might choose to work his dog for most of a familiarization but to heel his dog, using a sighted-guide, through a particularly complex or difficult area until he and the dog are more comfortable about it.

Again, when an O & M specialist is orienting a guide-dog user who is working his dog, attention would be given to the same types of clues and landmarks we mentioned previously. Additionally, definite object landmarks can now be established, if necessary, as we shall describe below.

4. Establishing landmarks:

Aside from using the clues and landmarks one normally encounters on any given route, it is also possible, with a guide-dog, to establish particular objects as landmarks so that the dog will consistently locate these objects when working that given route. This unique feature of guide-dog work has many useful applications ranging from use by very competent travelers in difficult and complex areas, e.g. a college campus, to use by persons with very limited orientation skills and abilities and who are basically rote travelers.

An object is established as a landmark through a combination of repetition and positive reinforcement. Once near the potential landmark, the O & M specialist would verbally describe the location of the desired object to the guide-dog user who would then give his dog the appropriate direction until the object is located. Once the object has been located, the guide-dog user would heap lavish praise upon his dog while at the same time identifying the landmark with his right hand (or with his foot if appropriate). He might also alternately tap the object and pat his dog while at the same time he gives verbal praise. In this way the dog establishes a positive association with the intended landmark. Following this procedure consistently and repeatedly will incorporate identifying the desired landmark into the dog's work pattern for that route. The amount of repetitions required to establish a landmark will vary from unit to unit. At least several close repetitions each day for five to ten days in a row is not unusual.

Once a landmark has been firmly established, the amount of praise can be gradually reduced until simple verbal praise will suffice to maintain the required positive reinforcement. Should the individual later decide not to use an established landmark, he should merely direct his dog away from the particular object but he should <u>not</u> correct his dog for locating a previously established landmark as this would be inconsistent and confusing to the dog. Several landmarks may be established and used on a single route.

This ability, to establish landmarks, is particularly useful since certain other environmental clues such as shorelines or surface textures are of limited use to the guide-dog user. Furthermore, just

as landmarks are established, simple routes may be rotely taught to the dog if they are worked frequently, and consistently enough and if positive reinforcement accompanies location of the objective. However, this procedure should be employed only when absolutely necessary since it is still the master's responsibility to maintain orientation and to direct the dog. Dependency on established landmarks or rote routes may lead to difficulties in attempting to work away from these landmarks or routes.

5. Self-familiarizations:

Some people prefer to self-familiarize themselves to an area or building rather than to rely upon assistance from O & M specialists or others. This can be done in an outside area by the guide-dog user by first establishing a major reference point or starting point and then working to a nearby minor reference point, usually the first street corner or some easily recognized landmark, paying close attention to available clues along the way. If the spatial relationship between the major reference point (A) and the minor reference point (B) is not certain then the unit should return to point A. If the relationship is clear then the unit can proceed to subsequent minor reference points. By maintaining orientation, a new route can be completed either by circumscribing an area or by reversing the sequence of minor reference points. Assistance from the general public should be solicited to clarify any difficulties.

A guide-dog does not particularly lend itself to self-familiarizations indoors. This is true because such familiarizations tend to involve much trailing and tactual establishment of landmarks. While the

master would wish to stay close to walls and objects the dog would attempt to stay a safe distance away from such walls and objects. The master could heel his dog and trail the walls with his right hand but he would sacrifice most of his protection. A better solution would be for the guide-dog user to carry a collapsible cane folded in his pocket. Once inside, he could heel his dog while he uses his cane during the self-familiarization process. While any cane technique, except perhaps a modified diagonal, will interfere with a working dog, it is permissible to heel a dog and employ a proper cane technique.

6. Initial adjustments:

When a new guide-dog user returns home after completing his training program, it is best if he begins by working his dog first on relatively simple and well known routes and gradually progresses to more difficult and more complex routes. In this manner both dog and master can become familiar with the routes and each will gain confidence in the other. A pattern of success is much more likely to be established by this method and any additional time required is time well spent. This principle would also apply, although to a lesser degree, to experienced guide-dog users who have just received new dogs.

B. Common Situations That May Present Some Difficulties

1. Transportation:

a. Private car: When traveling in a private car, the dog should be in a sitting position on the floor in front of its master. In this position the dog is braced for unexpected stops and the master can assist in supporting the dog. However, this position is not always

practical or possible. On extended trips the dog may be permitted to lie down. Alternatives may include the floor in front of the rear seat, the cargo area in a station wagon, or even on the seat if the car owner does not object. Common sense should always prevail. If a person has occasion to use taxis or private cars in which a dog on the seat would not be appreciated, then the master should make it a practice not to allow the dog on the seats in any car. It is usually best for the master to enter and exit the vehicle first, while the dog remains at sit-stay, and to have the dog follow.

b. Public transportation: Whenever a guide-dog user intends to utilize public transportation, of any kind, he should be sure to carry a muzzle with him and to use it when required.

i. Bus - The master should usually work the dog onto the bus and up to the coin box. He can then pay his fare and heel the dog to the nearest available seat, after informing the driver of his destination. A seat running sideways (and close to the driver) is preferrable as it allows more room for the dog. The dog should be placed in a sitting position, facing the same way as the master. This position allows the dog to brace itself and prevents it from having its tail stepped on. When leaving the bus, the master heels the dog to the desired exit and then works the dog off the bus and to the sidewalk.

ii. Subway - Before a person attempts to work subway situations he should become thoroughly familiarized with the stations and trains that he will use. In unfamiliar areas he should solicit assistance rather than attempt a self-familiarization. The unit should work throughout the station and on the platform except when accepting

sighted-guide assistance. The unit should wait for the subway train approximately 4 - 6 feet from the edge of the platform, facing the edge of the platform, with the dog at sit and relaxed. When the train arrives, the master waits until the train slows down and then picks up the harness handle and prepares to move. When the master hears the doors open he commands "Forward" at the same time he assumes a modified upper-hand and forearm protective technique to prevent the doors from closing on him. The dog will locate the doors and indicate the small gap between the platform and the train either by hesitating or by taking a small leap over it. Once on the subway car, the unit should locate the nearest available seat. The master sits with the dog sitting in front of him and facing the same way. The master can help support the dog and should keep it relaxed at all times. When preparing to exit, the person assumes the work position as the train approaches the station. He will need to stabilize himself by holding a vertical or overhead support bar. When the train stops and the doors open, the unit exits the train, again working while assuming a modified protective technique. Once off the train, the unit should work a few feet from the edge of the platform and pause until the train leaves the station. This is to lessen the amount of noise and stress that the dog has to contend with. Finally, the unit can work through the station and exit.

For mobility personnel familiarizing a guide-dog unit with subway stations, it is recommended that they first do a familiarization without the dog and with the long cane if possible. Next, they should repeat the familiarization sighted-guide with the dog at heel. Finally, they should observe the working unit.

iii. Trains - Trains would be handled similarly to subways and busses. The difference would be that on long trips the dog's harness may be removed and the dog should be allowed to lie down in the area in front of the seat. The first seat in each car (bulkhead seat) or seats that face each other may provide additional room.

iv. Taxi - Taxis are handled as are private cars. The dog should be in a sitting position on the floor, not on the seat.

v. Airplanes - An airline should be informed ahead of time that a guide-dog unit will be flying on one of its flights. An effort is usually made, by the airline, to pre-board the unit. This is a convenience but by no means a necessity. The unit may work onto the plane or be taken sighted-guide, dog at heel. The master should request a bulkhead seat and, if possible, one next to a vacant seat. This is to allow more room for the dog.

Once on board the plane, the dog should be in a sitting position, with its harness on, in front of its master during take-off and landing procedures. In the interim flight period the dog's harness may be removed and the dog may be allowed to lie down.

It is recommended that whenever a long trip is taken, the dog not be fed for 24 hours prior to the trip and not given water for 12 hours prior to the trip. The dog should be given every opportunity to park prior to the journey.

2. Public buildings:

Again, the master should always carry a muzzle.

a. Recreational and dining: Individual states have various laws pertaining to where guide-dogs are and are not permitted. Often any

facility open to the general public is open to a working guide-dog unit. Consideration should be shown, when using such facilities, in that the dog should be clean, well mannered, under control, unobtrusive, and well parked. A muzzle should be carried by the master and worn by the dog when required.

b. Shopping; Supermarkets and department stores: The most important thing in working a dog inside any building is that the dog must be under good control. More narrow passages and congested areas are likely to be encountered inside a building than outside, particularly in aisle situations. When working aisle situations, the dog will usually indicate a break or end to an aisle by hesitating or trying to turn. At this time the master would direct the dog in the desired direction. Information must be solicited in order to locate the desired products. When examining, or paying for, merchandise, the dog should be at a sit-stay either beside the master or between the master and the counter. A back pack rather than a shopping cart should be used.

Dogs can be worked through revolving doors or they may be heeled through on the right side. At no time and under no circumstances should a dog be taken on an escalator, moving or stopped, as a dog's paws can become caught and the dog seriously injured. Only stairs or elevators can be used by a guide-dog unit.

c. Educational: In any school buildings, it is important that the dog be under control and unobtrusive. The dog should be kept at a down-stay in the most convenient location during a class. The master can keep the ball of his foot on the leash buckle near the collar

and on the floor in order to preclude unwarranted movement on the part of the dog. The harness may be kept on or removed as best suits the situation. Care must be taken to avoid excessive attention being given to the dog by other students. On difficult college campus situations it may be necessary to establish a series of landmarks and/or rote routes in order to facilitate travel.

d. Vocational: In vocational settings, it is usually best to provide the dog with a down-chain or a kennel area during work hours. Also, a parking area should be established and used regularly. In some settings, particularly noisy ones with unfamiliar machinery, it may be desirable for the master to first familiarize himself without the dog, then to repeat the familiarization with the dog at heel, and finally to begin working the dog in the area. An O & M instructor can be very helpful in such a situation and should handle it similarly to a subway station familiarization.

3. Adverse weather conditions:

Dogs can and will work under all but the most severe weather conditions. There are, however, some common sense procedures that should be followed when working under various conditions. It is most important that the master dresses appropriately for any given weather condition. No additional protection, other than its natural coat, is required by the dog.

a. Rain: Units usually have no undue difficulties working in the rain. The master should have adequate foot protection as the dog will work straight through many minor puddles. Major puddles will be handled as an obstacle if possible but there may be times when the

unit may have to ford these also. Dripping ledges or awnings may be handled as obstacles depending upon how much water is running. If the dog is splashed by a car at a corner it may become reluctant to approach the next down curb. If the dog backs up because of another approaching car, the master should back up also and then come to the curb again. It is difficult, though not impossible, to use an umbrella when working with a guide-dog because the dog may be confused by the presence of a constant over-hang. Also, the umbrella may tend to drip water on the dog. A rain coat and hat are preferred over an umbrella. If a dog appears shy of thunder or lightening it should be encouraged, not corrected. If this problem persists, the guide-dog school should be notified.

b. Snow: Problems encountered in snow conditions usually fall into one of the following categories: i. Traction; ii. Limited access and clearance; iii. Orientation.

i. Traction: The dog usually does not have too much difficulty with traction because it is quadripedal. The master may be a different story. Good boots or overshoes with a well designed sole are a must in order to alleviate this problem. Also, the unit should work more slowly than it usually does. Cleats, of any type, are not recommended since they may injure the dog. Ice and salt may give some dogs temporary minor foot irritation. In such situations it is best to just continue working the dog through the situation. Dog foot protection, of any kind, is not recommended as it precludes the eventual toughening of the dog's natural foot pads.

ii. Limited access and clearance: Many more narrow passage

situations and clearance problems will be encountered in snow conditions than in good weather. These should be handled appropriately but with some appreciation of the difficulty of the situation. In very deep snow, it may be desirable to work in the street. When this is done, the unit should work facing traffic and as far to the left as possible (see section 4 - country travel). Also, it may be that the dog will try to do more sniffing than usual. This is to be expected but it should still be corrected, with a right-handed correction.

iii. Orientation: As with a cane, orientation becomes more difficult under snow conditions. But this is one example of a situation in which the dog can complement the master's abilities and assist him in maintaining the direction of travel. While many tactual landmarks and clues will be unavailable or changing, the dog will still have visual and olfactory references, clues, and landmarks to go by, especially in familiar areas. While orientation is still the responsibility of the master, the indications given him by his dog can be a great assistance in helping him to interpret his environment. An O & M instructor can assist by observing and informing the master about the environmental conditions and how the dog is responding to them. Some dogs will make every effort to follow the proper path. Others will follow the path of least resistance and miss appropriate turns if they are blocked or partially blocked by snow.

c. Heat: In high temperature situations, the dog should be worked for shorter periods of time if possible. The pace may be slowed down a little but the dog should not be allowed to lag. Eventually, the dog's feet should adjust to the pavement temperatures. The dog

should be given additional access to drinking water and should be allowed to rest in a well ventilated shaded place when not working. Additional parking may be required. Also, the muzzle should not be used unless absolutely necessary because a dog cools itself by panting and a muzzle may restrict this.

d. Additional hints: Again, it is strongly urged that the master carry a "dog towel" whenever working in wet weather. This is done not only out of consideration for the dog, but also out of consideration for others around the dog. Also, a brisk rubbing after coming in from wet weather serves as a bit of extra reward for the dog.

It is important that the master use especially good praise when working in adverse weather, even though he may not really feel like it, in order to maintain the dog's enthusiasm for the work.

4. Country travel (roads without sidewalks or curbs):

A unit working on a road without a sidewalk should always work facing traffic and as far to the left as possible. If a shoulder is available it should be utilized and the tactual difference between the shoulder and the road can serve as a good orientation clue. Anytime the master feels he may be drifting to the right he should give his dog a suggested left command. He must not crowd the dog to the left as there may be obstacles or drop-offs to the left of the road. If the master is still uncertain, he can stop, make a 90 degree turn to the left, locate the shoulder, make a 90 degree turn to the right, and continue on.

It is essential that the master remain aware of his direction of travel at all times. Often, country corners are gradually rounded and

the dog may easily follow the curving shoreline. If the direction of travel is maintained, the dog should stop to indicate the perpendicular street. If the dog rounds the corner or does not indicate the perpendicular street, it should be corrected and re-worked as it was in non-rural work. An O & M instructor can assist by verbally informing the master of the precise time when a corner is being rounded or a street is being crossed.

Country travel is greatly facilitated if a series of landmarks can be established at corners and other important locations. Sewer grates, mailboxes, boulders, poles, trees or tree stumps, and many other things may be utilized as landmarks. If a destination is on the opposite side of the street, the unit can either work to the nearest corner past the destination and work back to the destination, always facing traffic, or it can establish a landmark across from the destination and execute a middle-of-the-block crossing. Middle-of-the-block crossings should not be done without prior establishment of a definite landmark, and only when an unreasonable additional distance would have to be traveled in order to cross at a corner.

5. Soliciting information and assistance:

When soliciting information from the public, the guide-dog should be placed at a sit-stay, or down-stay whenever a prolonged conversation is taking place. The harness handle should never be dropped at a downcurb but rather the unit should take a few steps back from the curb and then the handle may be released. It is important that the master maintain his direction and only make purposeful turns when soliciting information. If the master does turn while soliciting aid or information,

it is most important that he not twist and turn while holding the harness handle. This confuses the dog, takes the initiative away from the dog, may disorient the master, and may damage the harness. To change direction while soliciting aid, the master can first change himself, holding only the leash, and then have the dog "come" to the work position or he can work the dog using directional commands. As mentioned before, it is imperative that the dog not be worked at the same time that the master is accepting physical assistance. In this situation the dog must be heeled.

C. Electronic Travel Aids (Environmental Sensors).

Among the various electronic environmental sensors or travel aids that are currently available, some are more amenable than others to use in conjunction with a guide-dog.

1. Lindsay Russel Pathsounder:

Because of its limited scope, environmental interpretation, and directionality and because of its obtrusiveness, the pathsounder has found little use by guide-dog users. It does not, in fact, provide much information that a normally functioning person with a good dog would not otherwise have. It may have some value in connection with attempts to service deaf-blind with guide-dogs.

2. C-5 Laser Cane:

The C-5 Laser Cane, while a good mobility aid in its own right, is not well suited to use with a dog-guide. This is so because in order for the C-5 Laser Cane to be used effectively, it must be used with a proper alternating-arc cane technique, e.g., the two-point-touch technique. Such a technique would definitely interfere with a

working guide-dog.

3. Mowat Sensor:

The Mowat Sensor appears to be a device that is well suited for use in conjunction with a guide-dog. It is hand-held, small, and unobtrusive. It provides relevant information along with good scope. Its directionality is dependent solely on the direction of the user's hand and consequently can be changed readily and used for scanning. The primary use of the Mowat Sensor should be that of an object detector. By using a Mowat Sensor, a guide-dog user is capable of locating various objects in the environment, that he might otherwise avoid, without interfering with his dog. Consequently, various objects could be used as clues and landmarks without establishing them as such in the mind of the dog. Examples of such objects might include such things as mailboxes, bus shelters, light poles, trees or bushes, door recesses, etc.

4. Sonic Guide:

The Sonic Guide also appears to have good possibilities for use with a guide-dog. Its unobtrusiveness, directionality, and varying display, presenting much useful information, certainly recommend it. There might be, however, some question concerning how the speed at which a capable guide-dog user would normally travel might affect Sonic Guide use with respect to both interpretative ability and Doppler effect on accuracy. A dog-guide user might find it advantageous to use his Sonic Guide only periodically in the course of a route to survey a particular environment. On the other hand, some individuals may very well be able to continuously monitor their environment while traveling

with a dog. Clearly, there is a need for more study and research in this area. It is interesting to note that the National Guide-Dog and Mobility Training Centre in Kew, Victoria, Australia has had considerable success in training dog-guide users to work with the Sonic Guide.

5. Training a dog-guide user to use an electronic travel aid:

Dog-guide users who wish to use electronic mobility aids also, should complete the normal training program, using cane and/or sighted-guide, that is recommended for the particular device that has been selected. Once a person has become well accustomed to using and interpreting the aid, he can begin to incorporate its use into work with the dog. Initial routes should be short, easy and familiar ones, with definite landmarks that are easily detected and recognized. Length and difficulty can be increased gradually.

The guide-dog user must take care that he does not use the electronic aid to do the dog's job. That is, he must not steer or cue the dog around objects that he may detect while using the aid. He must allow the dog to work normally, otherwise he will take the initiative away from the dog and the dog's work pattern will deteriorate.

Ultrasonic electronic aids operate at frequencies between 30 KHz and 90 KHz. Dogs are capable of hearing frequencies in the lower end of this range but it does not appear that dogs are adversely affected by the operation of such devices.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Quite obviously, this manual has not covered every problem or situation that guide-dog users may encounter in the field. One should not expect to become an expert in this area by merely becoming familiar with the contents of this manual. We have attempted to stress the extreme importance of good orientation and consistency of handling for good dog-guide work. However, it is altogether possible that we may have raised as many questions as we have answered. We therefore respectfully submit the following suggestions for consideration.

To the Orientation and Mobility specialist:

Every effort should be made to visit a guide-dog school if at all possible. Furthermore, O & M specialists should acquaint themselves with the locations, procedures, and policies of the various guide-dog schools throughout the country. If it is not possible to visit a guide-dog school, the O & M specialist might contact one and ask if it might be possible to arrange meeting and observing a representative guide-dog user from their school at a mutually convenient location.

To the universities offering degrees in Orientation and Mobility:

A one or two credit course dealing with the basics of guide-dog utilization should be included as a standard part of the curriculum. Similar courses are currently offered dealing with low-vision aids and electronic-travel-aids, and it is unfortunate that guide-dogs, a well proven mobility aid, have been so long neglected. Such courses could be taught by guide-dog instructors on temporary leave of absence

from their respective schools or by full-time staff members who have acquired the necessary expertise.

To the guide-dog schools:

Every effort should be made to educate Orientation and Mobility specialists about guide-dog work on a professional level. O & M specialists should be looked on as a potentially valuable local resource to be utilized by guide-dog school and guide-dog user alike.

It might be possible to set up intensive one or two week (or longer) in-service training seminars at the guide-dog schools, during which time certified O & M instructors could be formally taught rudimentary basics of guide-dog utilization including such things as evaluation of prospective students, recognition of proper and improper working techniques, and remediation of simple problems. Upon successful completion of such a course the guide-dog schools might consider presenting the O & M specialist with a test-harness and leash for use in the field, along with some sort of formal recognition.

We realize that such a program would require a considerable investment of time, effort, and money, but we believe that the potential dividends to be gained, in the form of positive public relations, increased and improved follow-up services, and increased referrals, are enormous.

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